Lectures on The Study Of History.

By Goldwin Smith, M.A.

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LECTURES ON THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

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LECTURES

ON THE

STUDY OF HISTORY.

INAUGURAL.

New statutes having just been made by the Crown, on the recommendation of the Council, for the purpose of adapting the Professorship I have the honour to hold to the present requirements of the University, this seems a fit occasion for saying a few words on the study of Modern History in Oxford, and the functions of this Chair in relation to that study. I made some remarks on the subject in commencing my first course with my class; but the new statutes were then only under consideration, and before venturing to address the University, I wished to become acquainted with the state of the Modern History school, and with the duties of my Chair.

This Chair was founded in the reign of George I., and its original object was to train students for the public

service. The foundation was double, one Chair here and one at Cambridge. Attached to each Chair were two teachers of Modern Languages, and twenty King's scholars, whose education in history and the modern languages the Professor was to superintend; and the most proficient among whom he was to recommend from time to time for employment, at home or abroad, in the service of the State. Diplomacy was evidently the first object of the foundation, for a knowledge of treaties is mentioned in the letters patent of foundation as specially necessary for the public interest. Some subsequent regulations, though of doubtful validity, named International Law and Political Economy, with the method of reading Modern History and Political Biography, as the subjects for the Professor's lectures. Thus the whole foundation may be said to have been in great measure an anticipation of the late resolution of the University to found a school of Law and Modern History. The Professorship of Modern History, the Professorship of Political Economy, the Chichele Professorship of Diplomacy and International Law, the Professor and Teachers of the Modern Languages, do now for the students of our present school just what the Professor of History and his two teachers of Modern Languages were originally intended to do for the twenty King's scholars under their care. The whole of these subjects have further been brought into connection, in the new school, with their natural associate, the study of Law.

I have failed, in spite of the kind assistance of my friends the Librarian of the Bodleian and the Keeper of the Archives, to trace the real author of what we must

allow to have been an enlightened and far-sighted scheme—a scheme which, had it taken effect, might have supplied Parliament and the public service in the last century with highly trained legislators and statesmen, and perhaps have torn some dark and disastrous pages from our history. It is not likely that the praise is due to the King himself, who, though not without sense and public spirit, was indifferent to intellectual pursuits. Conjecture points to Sir Robert Walpole. That Minister was at the height of power when the Professorship was founded under George I. When the foundation was confirmed under George II., he had just thrust aside the feeble pretensions of Sir Spencer Compton, and gathered the reins of Government, for a moment placed in the weak hands of the favourite, again into his own strong and skilful grasp. If Walpole was the real founder, if he even sanctioned the foundation, it is a remarkable testimony from a political leader of a turn of mind practical to coarseness, and who had discarded the literary statesmen of the Somers and Halifax school, to the value of high political education as a qualification for the public service. It is also creditable to the memory of a Minister, the reputed father of the system of Parliamentary corruption, that he should have so far anticipated one of the best of modern reforms as to have been willing to devote a large amount of his patronage to merit, and to take that merit on the recommendation of Universities, one of which, at least, was by no means friendly to the Crown.

King George I., however, or his Minister, was not the first of English rulers who had endeavoured to draw

direct from the University a supply of talented and highly educated men for the service of the State. I almost shrink from mentioning the name which intrudes so grimly into the long list of the Tory and High Church Chancellors of Oxford. But it was at least the nobler part of Cromwell's character which led him to protect Oxford and Cambridge from the levelling fanaticism of his party, to make himself our Chancellor, to foster our learning with his all-pervading energy, and to seek to draw our choicest youth to councils which it must be allowed were always filled, as far as the evil time permitted, with an eye to the interest of England, and to her interest alone. Cromwell's name is always in the mouths of those who despise or hate high education, who call, in every public emergency, for native energy and rude common sense,—for no subtle and fastidious philosophers, but strong practical men. They seem to think that he really was a brewer of Huntingdon who left his low calling in a fit of fanatical enthusiasm to lead a great cause (great, whether it were the right cause or the wrong,) in camp and council, to win battles against Prince Rupert and David Leslie, to fascinate the imagination of Milton, and by his administration at home and abroad to raise England, in five short years, and on the morrow of a bloody civil war, to a height of greatness to which she still looks back with a proud and wistful eye. Cromwell, to use his own words, "was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity;" he was educated, suitably to his birth, at a good classical school; he was at Cambridge; he read law; but what was much more than this, he, who is supposed

to have owed his power to ignorance and narrowness of mind, had brooded almost to madness over the deepest questions of religion and politics, and, as a kinsman of Hampden and an active member of Hampden's party, had held intimate converse on those questions with the profoundest and keenest intellects of that unrivalled age. And therefore his ambition, if it was treasonable, was not low. Therefore he bore himself always not as one who gambled for a stake, but as one who struggled for a cause. Therefore the great soldier loved the glory of peace above the glory of war, and the moment he could do so, sheathed his victorious sword ; therefore, if he was driven to govern by force, he was driven to it with reluctance, and only after long striving to govern by nobler means ; therefore he kept a heart above tinsel, and, at a height which had turned the head of Cæsar, remained always master of himself; therefore he loved and called to his council-board high and cultivated intellect, and employed it to serve the interest of the State without too anxiously enquiring how it would serve his own ; therefore he felt the worth of the Universities, saved them from the storm which laid throne and altar in the dust, and earnestly endeavoured to give them their due place and influence as seminaries of statesmen. Those who wish to see the conduct of a real brewer turned into a political chief, should mark the course of Santerre in the French Revolution. Those who wish to see how power is wielded without high cultivation and great ideas, should trace the course of Napoleon, so often compared with Cromwell, and preferred to him ;—Napoleon, the great despiser of philosophers ;—and ask whether a little

of the philosophy he despised might not have mitigated the vulgar vanity which breathes through his bulletins, and tempered his vulgar lust of conquest with some regard for nobler things. It would indeed be a flaw in nature if that which Arnold called the highest earthly work, the work of government, were best performed by blind ignorance and headlong force, or by a cunning which belongs almost as much to brutes as to man. The men who have really left their mark on England, the founders of her greatness from Alfred to the Elizabethan statesmen, and from the Elizabethan statesmen down to Canning and Peel, have been cultivated in various ways; some more by study, some more by thought ; some by one kind of study, some by another ; but in one way or other they have been all cultivated men. The minds of all have been fed and stimulated, through one channel or another, with the great thoughts of those who had gone before them, and prepared for action by lofty meditations, the parents of high designs.

The attempt of the Crown, however, to found a political school at Oxford and Cambridge by means of this Professorship, must be said, at the time, to have failed. Perhaps at Oxford the Whig seed fell on a Jacobite soil. Long after this the evils of a disputed succession were felt here, and the University was the slave of one of the two political factions, to the utter loss of her true power and her true dignity as the impartial parent of good and great citizens for the whole nation. The Jacobite Hearne has recorded in his Diary his anguish at the base condescension of the Convocation in even returning thanks for the Professorship to the royal

founder, whom he styles "the Duke of Brunswick, commonly called King George I." Nor does the new study in itself seem to have been more welcome, at this time, than other innovations. The Convocation point their gratitude especially to that part of the royal letter which promises "that the hours for teaching His Majesty's scholars the Modern Languages shall be so ordered as not to interfere with those already appointed for their academical studies." What the academical studies were which were to be so jealously guarded against the intrusion of Modern History and Modern Languages, what they were even for one who came to Oxford gifted, ardent, eager to be taught, is written in the autobiography of Gibbon. It is written in every history, every essay, every novel, every play which describes or betrays the manners of the clergy and gentry of England in that dissolute, heartless, and unbelieving age. It is written in the still darker records of faction, misgovernment, iniquity in the high places both of Church and State, and in the political evils and fiscal burdens which have been bequeathed by those bad rulers even to our time. The corruption was not universal, or the nation would never have lifted its head again. The people received the religion which the gentry and clergy had rejected; the people preserved the traditions of English morality and English duty; the people repaired, by their unflagging industry, the waste of profligate finance, and of reckless and misconducted wars. But as to the character of the upper classes, whose educational discipline the Convocation of that day were so anxious to guard against the the intrusion of new knowledge, there cannot be two

opinions. We have left that depravity far behind us; but in the day of its ascendancy perhaps its greatest source was here.

But not only was Oxford lukewarm in encouraging the new studies; the Crown, almost unavoidably, failed to do its part. At the time of the foundation Walpole was all-powerful, and might have spared a part of the great bribery fund of patronage for the promotion of merit. But soon followed the fierce Parliamentary struggles of his declining hour, when the refusal of a place in the public office might have cost a vote, a vote might have turned a division, and an adverse division might not only have driven the hated minister from place, but have consigned him to the Tower. After the fall of Walpole came a long reign of corruption, connived at, though not shared, even by the soaring patriotism of Chatham, in which it would have been in vain to hope that anything which could be coveted by a boroughmonger would be bestowed upon a promising student. Under these most adverse circumstances few King's scholars seem ever to have been appointed. The scholars, and the commission given by the original statutes to the Professor to recommend the most diligent for employment under the Crown, have now, after long abeyance, been formally abolished by the Council in framing the new statutes, I confess, a little to my regret. The abuse of patronage drove the nation to the system of competitive examination. Competitive examination, in its turn, may be found to have its drawbacks. In that case there may be a disposition to try honest recommendation by public bodies; and in that event it might not have been out

of place for the Universities to remind the Government of the expressed desire and the old engagement of the Crown.

In the meantime, Modern History and its associate studies enjoy the more certain encouragement of a Modern History School and academical honours. They also enjoy, or ought to enjoy, the encouragement of being the subjects of examination for the Fellowships of All Souls ; a College destined, by the statesmen who founded it, in great measure for the study of the Civil Law—that study which once formed the Statesmen of Europe, and connected the Universities with the cabinets of Kings, and the wealthy and powerful professors of which, in Italy, its most famous seat, sleep beside princes, magistrates, and nobles, in many a sumptuous tomb.

Possibly, also, the School of Law and Modern History being practically a modified revival of the Faculty of Law in the University, the subjects of examination for the degree of B.C.L., and the qualifications for the degree of D.C.L., might be modified in a corresponding manner. If this were done I should not despair of seeing a real value imparted to these degrees. I would respectfully commend this point to the consideration of the Council.

The University seems to have had two objects in instituting the new Schools, that of increasing industry by bringing into play the great motive power of love of a special subject, and that of making education a more direct training for life. These are the titles of the History School to continued support, even

if its state for some time to come should need indulgence; as indulgence I fear it will long need, unless the University should see fit to place it under more regular and authoritative guidance, and unless the difficulties which Colleges find in providing permanent tuition in this department can be in some way overcome.

That the love of a special subject is a great spur to industry needs no proof, and it has never yet been shewn that the mind is less exercised when it is exercised with pleasure. Every experienced student knows that the great secret of study is to read with appetite. Under the old system, the University relied mainly on the motive of ambition. Such ambition is manly and generous, and its contests here, conducted as they are, teach men to keep the rules of honour in the contests of after-life. Study pursued under its influence generally makes an aspiring character; but study pursued, in part at least, from love of the subject, makes a happier character; and why should not this also be taken into account in choosing the subjects of education? But the grand and proved defect of ambition as a motive is, that it fails with most natures, and that it fails especially with those, certainly not the least momentous part of our charge, whose position as men of wealth and rank is already fixed for them in life.

To make University education a more direct preparation for after-life, may be called Utilitarianism. The objection, no doubt, flows from a worthy source. We are the teachers of a great University, and we may take counsel of her greatness. We may act, and

are bound to act, on far-sighted views of the real interests of education, without paying too much deference to the mere fashion of the hour. But the most far-sighted views of the real interests of education would lead us to make our system such as to draw hither all the mental aristocracy of the country—its nobility, its gentry, its clergy, its great professions, the heads of its great manufactures and trades. It was so in the earlier period of our history, when almost every man of intellectual eminence in any line must have looked back to the Universities not only as the scene of his youth but as the source of the knowledge which was to him power, wealth, and honour. To power, wealth, and honour, our system of education must lead, if it is to keep its hold on England, though it should be to power which shall be nobly used, to wealth which shall be nobly spent, and to honour which shall shine beyond the hour. Utilitarianism in education is a bad thing. But the great places of national education may avoid Utilitarianism till Government is in the hands of ambitious ignorance, till the Bench of Justice is filled with pettifoggers, till coarse cupidity and empiricism stand beside the sick bed, till all the great levers of opinion are in low, uneducated hands. Our care for the education of the middle classes, however it may be applauded in itself, will ill compensate the country for our failure to perform thoroughly the task of educating our peculiar charge, the upper classes, and training them to do, and teaching them how to do, their duty to the people.

There is one class of our students—I fear of late

a diminishing class—which I believe the University had specially in view in instituting the School of Law and Modern History, and which it was thought particularly desirable to win to study by the attraction of an interesting subject, and to train directly for the duties of after-life, more especially as the education of this class closes here. The duties in after-life of the class I refer to are peculiar, and its position seems fast becoming unique in Europe.

"In Flanders, Holland, Friesland," says Mr. Laing in his well known work on Europe in 1848, "about the estuaries of the Scheldt, Rhine, Ems, Weser, Elbe, and Eyder; in a great part of Westphalia and other districts of Germany; in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; and in the south of Europe, in Switzerland, the Tyrol, Lombardy and Tuscany, the peasants have from very early times been the proprietors of a great proportion of the land. France and Prussia" (it seems he will soon be able to say Russia) "have in our times been added to the countries in which the land is divided into small estates of working peasant proprietors. In every country of Europe, under whatever form of government, however remotely and indirectly affected by the wars and convulsions of the French revolution, and however little the laws, institutions and spirit of the government may as yet be in accordance with this social state of the people, the tendency, during this century, has been to the division and distribution of the land into small estates of a working peasant proprietary, not to its aggregation into large estates of a nobility and gentry. This has been the real revo-

lution in Europe. The only exception is Great Britain." In the Colonies, we may add, even of Great Britain, the tendency to small estates and working proprietors prevails; and as colonies are drawn, generally speaking, from the most advanced and enterprising part of the population, their tendencies are to their mother country a prophecy of her own future.

The force of opinion in this age is paramount: and it runs with the certainty, if not with the speed of electricity round the sympathetic circle of European nations. Of these two systems, the system of great landowners and the system of small working proprietors, that will assuredly prevail which European opinion shall decide to be the better for the whole people. But which is the better system for the whole people, is a question with a double aspect. One aspect is that of physical condition; the other is that of civilization. It may be that the civilizing influence of a resident class of gentry, well educated themselves, and able and willing to be the moral and social educators of the people, may countervail the material advantages which a land-owning peasantry enjoy, and even the accession of moral dignity, the prudence, the frugality, which the possession of property in the working class, even more than in others, seems clearly to draw in its train.[a] But then the gentry must know their position, and own their duty to those by whose labour they are fed. They must be resident, they must be well educated, they must be able and willing to act as the social and moral educators of those below them.

[a] I am here only stating the case as it may be stated in favour of the present system, not giving my own opinion on the question.

They must do their part, and their Universities must make it a definite and primary object to teach them to do their part, in a system under which, if they will do their part, they at least may enjoy such pure, true, and homefelt happiness as never Spanish grandee or French seigneur knew. If they are to make it their duty, under the influence of overstrained notions of the rights of property, to squander the fruits of the peasant's labour in dull luxury, or in swelling the vice and misery of some great capital, the cry already heard, "the great burden on land is the landlord," may swell till it prevails ; till it prevails in England, as it has prevailed in the land, separated from ours only by a few leagues of sea, which, eighty years ago, fed the luxury of Versailles. The luxury of Versailles seemed to itself harmless and even civilizing ; it was graceful and enlightened ; it was not even found wanting in philanthropy, though it was found wanting in active duty. Before the Revolution, the fervour and the austerity of Rousseau had cast out from good society the levity and sensuality of Voltaire.[b] Atheism, frivolity, heartlessness, sybaritism, had gone out of fashion with Madame de Pompadour and Madame Du Barri. Theism, philanthropy, earnestness, and even simplicity of life, or at least the praise of simplicity of life, had become the order of the day ; the beams of better times to come played upon the current, and the rainbow of Utopian hope bent over it, as it drew, with a force now past mortal control, to the most terrible gulf in history. Even the genius of Carlyle has perhaps failed

[b] See Lavallée, Histoire des Francais. Bk. iii., section 3, chap. 5.

to paint strongly enough this characteristic of the Revolution, and to make it preach clearly enough its tremendous lesson as to the difference between social sentiment and social duty. We know Paley's apologue of the idle pigeon, consuming, squandering, scattering about in lordly wastefulness the store of corn laboriously gathered for him by the subservient flock. That apologue, catching the eye of King George III., is said to have cost Paley a bishopric. But its moral, duly pointed, is nothing more dangerous than that property has its duties. Landed property, fortunately for the moral dignity and real happiness of its possessors, has its obvious duties. Funded property, and other kinds of accumulated wealth, have duties less obvious, to the performance of which the possessors must be guided, if the Universities desire to see them living the life and holding the place in creation, not of animals of large, varied, and elaborate consumption, but of men.

But can education teach the rich to do their duty? If it cannot, why do the rich come to places of education? If it cannot, what have we to do but abdicate that part of our trust? But experience says it can. Look round to the really well educated men of property of your acquaintance. Are they not, as a body, good and active members of society, promoters of good social objects, and, if landowners, resident, and endeavouring to earn the rent the labour of the people pays them, by doing good among the people? In feudal times, when the landed aristocracy and gentry owed the State military service, they were trained to arms; now they owe the State social service, and they must be trained by educa-

tion to social duties, not to the duties; of schoolmasters, lecturers, or statists, but to the duties of landed gentlemen. Before the late changes, the influence of education had hardly been tried on them. A little philology and a little geometry, forgotten as soon as learnt, might sharpen the wits a little, but could awaken no lasting intellectual interest, open no intellectual pleasures to compete with animal enjoyments, kindle generous sympathies and aspirations in no heart. Now we have for the aristocracy and gentry a school, in effect, of Social Science, that is, of Jurisprudence, including Constitutional Law, and of Political Economy, with History illustrating both. This appeals, as directly as it can, to the interests of the class for whom it was instituted, and by whom it appears not to be rejected. It is an experiment, but it is a rational and practical experiment, and human legislation can be no more.[c]

I dwell on these points because we have heard expressed, by persons of influence in Council and Congregation, a desire, which I doubt not extensively prevails, to undo our recent legislation; a feeling which, if it does not actually bring us back to the old system, may cripple the operation of the new. The old system stood condemned, so far as the gentry were concerned, not by its theoretical imperfections as a scheme of education, but by its manifest results; results which are felt and deplored in country parishes by clergymen who uphold the system here. History and its cognate subjects may

[c] On reviewing this passage I fear I have spoken in too sanguine terms of the probable effects of education on those who are without the common motives for exertion.—Note to 2nd Edit.

not prove as much intellectual power as the mixed philosophical and philological culture of the old classical school. Their true place and value, in a perfect system of education, will be fixed when we shall have solved those great educational problems which, in their present uncertainty, and considering their vast importance to society, may worthily employ and well reward the most powerful and aspiring minds. But these studies at least form a real education, with something that may interest, something that may last, something that may set the student reflecting, and make him unwilling to live a mere life of idleness by the sweat of other men's brows. If in them, as compared with severer studies, some concession is made to the comparative feebleness of the principle of industry in those who are not compelled to work for their bread with brain or hand, it is only a reasonable recognition of the real facts of the case, to which all ideals of education, as well as of politics, must bend. The difficulties of education necessarily increase when it has to do with those who are placed by birth at the level to which other men by labour aspire, and who are heirs to wealth which they have not earned, and honour which they have not won.

One grand advantage the English system of property and society has over the rival system of the Continent,—and it is an advantage which our new scheme of education for the gentry tends directly, and we may say infallibly, to improve. The connexion between the distribution of property, especially landed property in a country, and its political institutions, is necessarily close; and countries of peasant proprietors have proved hitherto in-

capable of supporting constitutional government.[d] Those countries gravitate towards centralized and bureaucratic despotism with a force which in France, after many years of parliamentary liberty, seams to have decisively resumed its sway. There is no class wealthy and strong enough to form independent Parliaments, or of local influence sufficient to sustain local self-government through the country. There is nothing to stand between the people and the throne. This is the great historic service of the English landed gentry. But it is a service which cannot be well or safely performed without a political education. Europe is filled with the rivalry between the constitutional and imperialist systems, the greatest political controversy which has arisen in any age. Those who would watch that controversy with intelligence, and judge it rightly, must remember that Parliaments, like other institutions, are good only as they are well used. If Parliaments were to tax and legislate as ignorant and bigoted Parliaments, the blind delegates of class interests, have taxed and legislated in evil times, the case of the advocates of democratic despotism would be strong. Tyranny, the Imperialists might say, is an evil; but the worst tyranny of the worst tyrant is short, partial, intermittent, and it falls on high and low alike, or rather on the high than on the low. There is no tyranny so constant, so searching, so hopeless, no tyranny which so surely makes the people its victims, as class taxation and class law. The political ascendancy which the gentry in feudal times owed to arms they must now retain, if they retain it, by superior-

[d] This remark must be limited to the monarchical nations of Europe.

ity of intelligence, and by making it felt that their government is a government of reason in the interest of the whole people. Conservatism itself, if it were the special function of Oxford to produce that element of opinion, ought for its own best purposes to be an enlightened Conservatism, not a Conservatism of desperate positions and ruinous defeats. We may be on the eve of social as well as political change. The new distribution of political power which all parties in the State appear to regard as near at hand,[e] will certainly alter the character of legislation, and will very probably draw with it an alteration of those laws touching the settlement and the inheritance of property by which great estates are partly held together. In that case, Oxford may in time cease to have the same class to educate, and may have, accordingly, to qualify her system of education. But the mission of a University is to society as it is; and the political character and intelligence of the English gentry is, and will be for a long time to come, a main object of our system and a principal test of its success.

It is impossible not to be struck with the high character and the high intelligence of the English aristocracy and gentry in the early part of the seventeenth century. Their lot was cast in an evil day, when the deep-seated and long-festering division between Anglo-Catholicism and Protestantism, and between the political tendencies congenial to each, was destined, almost inevitably, to break out in a civil contest. But in that contest the gentlemen of England bore themselves so that their

[e] In 1859.

country has reason to be proud of them for ever. Nothing could be more lofty than their love of principles; nothing more noble than their disregard of all personal and class interests when those principles were at stake. The age was, no doubt, one of high emotions, such as might constrain the man who best loved his ancestral title and his hereditary lands to hold them well lost for a great cause. But it appears likely that education had also played its part. The nobility and gentry as a class seem to have been certainly more highly educated in the period of the later Tudors and the earlier Stuarts than in any other period of our history. Their education was classical. But a classical education meant then not a gymnastic exercise of the mind in philology, but a deep draught from what was the great, and almost the only spring of philosophy, science, history and poetry at that time. It is not to philological exercise that our earliest Latin grammar exhorts the student, nor is it a mere sharpening of the faculties that it promises as his reward. It calls to the study of the language wherein is contained a great treasure of wisdom and knowledge; and, the student's labour done, wisdom and knowledge were to be his meed. It was to open that treasure, not for the sake of philological niceties or beauties, not to shine as the inventor of a cannon or the emendator of a corrupt passage, that the early scholars undertook those ardent, life-long, and truly romantic toils which their massy volumes bespeak to our days—our days which are not degenerate from theirs in labour, but in which the most ardent intellectual labour is directed to a new prize. Besides, Latin was still the language of literary, ecclesiastical, diplo-

matic, legal, academical Europe; familiarity with it was the first and most indispensable accomplishment, not only of the gentlemen, but of the high-born and royal ladies of the time. We must take all this into account when we set the claims of classical against those of modern culture, and balance the relative amount of motive power we have to rely on for securing industry in either case. In choosing the subjects of a boy's studies you may use your own discretion; in choosing the subjects of a man's studies, if you desire any worthy and fruitful effort, you must choose such as the world values and such as may win the allegiance of a manly mind. It has been said that six months' study of the language of Schiller and Goethe will now open to the student more high enjoyment than six years' study of the languages of Greece and Rome. It is certain that six months' study of French will now open to the student more of Europe than six years' study of that which was once the European tongue. These are changes in the circumstances and conditions of education which cannot be left out of sight in dealing with the generality of minds. Great discoveries have been made by accident; but it is an accidental discovery, and must be noted as such, if the studies which were first pursued as the sole key to wisdom and knowledge, now that they have ceased not only to be the sole but the best key to wisdom and knowledge, are still the best instruments of education.

It would be rash to urge those who are destined to be statesmen, (and some here may well by birth and talent be destined to that high calling,) to leave the severer and therefore more highly valued training for that which is less valued because it is less severe. But those who are

to be statesmen ought to undergo a regular political education, and they ought to undergo it before they are plunged into party, and forced to see all history, all social and constitutional questions, and all questions of legislation, through its haze. There is a mass of information and established principles to be mastered before a man can embark usefully or even honestly in public life. The knowledge got up for debating societies, though far from worthless, is not sufficient. It is necessarily got up with the view of maintaining a thesis ; and even the oratory so formed, being without pregnancy of thought or that mastery of language which can only be acquired by the use of the pen, is not the oratory that will live. Nor will the ancient historians and the ancient writers on political philosophy serve the turn. The classics are indeed in this, as in other departments, a wonderful and precious manual of humanity ; but the great questions of political and social philosophy with which this age has to deal,—and surely no age ever had to deal with greater,—have arisen in modern times, and must be studied in modern writers. The great problems which perplex our statesmen touching the rights of the labouring population and the distribution of political power among all classes of the people, were completely solved for the ancients by Slavery, which placed at once out of the pale of political existence those whose capability of using rightly political power is now the great and pressing doubt. The problems and difficulties of the representative system were equally unknown to a State which was a city, and all whose free citizens met with ease to debate and vote in their own persons in the public place. So, again, with all

the great questions that have arisen out of the relations between the spiritual and the temporal power embodied in Church and State, the duty of the State towards religion, Church establishments, toleration, liberty of conscience. So, again, with the question of the education of the people, which was simple enough when the people were all freemen, supported in intellectual leisure by a multitude of slaves. In the history of the ancient republics we see indeed all the political motives and passions at work in their native form, and through a medium of crystal clearness; but under circumstances so different that few direct lessons can be drawn. Compare any revolution of Athens, Corcyra, or Rome, its simple springs and simple passions, with the vast complexity of the motives, sentiments, ideas, theories and aspirations which are upon the scene in the great drama of the French Revolution. New political, as well as new physical maladies are set up from time to time, as one great crisis succeeds another in the history of the world. Fanatical persecution was the deadly offspring of the Crusades; terrorism of the frenzied reign of the Jacobins. Political virtues, though the same in essence, assume a deeper character as history advances. The good Trajan forbade Pliny, as procurator of Bithynia, to prosecute the Christians, because persecution was *non hujusce sæculi*, it did not become that civilized age. But how far removed is this cold and haughty tolerance, which implicitly views religion as a question of police, from the deep doctrine of liberty of conscience, the late gain of a world which, after ages of persecution, martyrdom, and religious war, has found—at least its higher and purer spirits have

found—that true religion there cannot be where there is not free allegiance to the truth.

Two advantages the ancient historians have, or seem to have, over the modern, as instruments of education. The first is that they are removed in time from the party feelings of the present day. They might be expected to be as far from our passions as they are, considering the wide interval of ages, marvellously near to our hearts. And, undoubtedly, they are farther from our passions than the historians of the present day. Yet even to those serene and lofty peaks of the old world, political prejudice has found its way. The last great history of Greece is at once a most admirable history and a pamphlet which some may think less admirable in favor of universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and popular courts of law. The history of Rome, and of the Roman Empire especially, has been so much fixed on as a battle-ground, though often with strange irrelevancy, by the two great parties of the present day, that in France it is becoming a question of high police, and writers are liable to fall into the hands of administrative justice for taking any but the Cæsarean side.

The second advantage of the classical historians is their style. Their style, the style at least of those we read here, undoubtedly is a model of purity and greatness; and far be it from us to disregard style in choosing books of education. To appreciate language is partly to command it, and to command beautiful and forcible language is to have a key, with which no man who is to rule through opinion can dispense, to the heart and mind of man. To be the master of that talisman

you need not be its slave. Nor will a man be master of it without being master of better things. Language is not a musical instrument into which, if a fool breathe, it will make melody. Its tones are evoked only by the spirit of high or tender thought; and though truth is not always eloquent, real eloquence is always the glow of truth. The language of the ancients is of the time when a writer sought only to give plain expression to his thought, and when thought was fresh and young. The composition of the ancient historians is a model of simple narrative, for the imitation of all time. But if they told their tale so simply it was partly because they had a simple tale to tell. Such themes as Latin Christianity, European Civilization, the History of the Reformation, the History of Europe during the French Revolution, are not so easily reduced to the proportions of artistic beauty, nor are the passions they excite so easily calmed to the serenity of Sophoclean art. My friend the Professor of Poetry may be right in saying that our great age of art, in history at least, is not yet fully come. The subject of the decline of Feudalism and the Papacy, and the rise of Modern Society, is not yet rounded off. The picture of that long struggle may be painted by a calm hand when the struggle itself is done. But not all ancients are classics. The clumsiest and most prolix of modern writers need not fear comparison with Dionysius of Halicarnassus, nor the dryest and most lifeless with the Hellenics. Nor are all moderns devoid of classical beauty. No narrative so complicated was ever conducted with so much skill and unity as that of Lord Macaulay. No historical

painting ever was so vivid as that which lures the reader through all that is extravagant in Carlyle. Gibbon's shallow and satirical view of the Church and Churchmen has made him miss the grand action and the grand actors on the stage. But turn to the style and structure of his great work—its condensed thought, its lofty and sustained diction, its luminous grandeur and august proportions, reared as it is out of a heap of materials the most confused and mean—and ask of what Greek or Roman edifice, however classical, it is not the peer? In all those sad pages of the history of Oxford there is none sadder than the page which records the student-life of Gibbon. The Oxford of that day is not the Oxford of ours, and we need not fear once and again to speak of it with freedom. But to Oxford are, at least, partly due those foul words and images of evil which will for ever meet the eye of the historical student, passing, as the historical students of all time will pass, over that stately and undecaying arch which spans the chaos of the declining empire from the old world to the new.

The intrinsic value of studies is a distinct thing from their educational value; though, in the case of manly education, the one, as I have ventured to submit, is deeply affected by the other. It would appear that to be available for the higher education a subject must be traversed by principles and capable of method; it must be either a science or a philosophy, not a mere mass of facts without principle or law. In my next lecture I shall venture to offer some reasons for believing, in despite of theories which seem in the ascendant, that history can never be a science. It is, however, fast be-

coming a philosophy, having for its basis the tendencies of our social nature, and for the objects of its research the correlation of events, the march of human progress in the race and in the separate nations, and the effects, good or evil, of all the various influences which from age to age have been brought to bear on the character, mind, and condition of man. This process is being now rapidly carried on through the researches of various schools of speculators on history, from the metaphysical school of Hegel to the positivist school of Comte; researches which, though they may be often, though they may hitherto always have been, made under the perverse guidance of theories more or less one-sided, crude, or fantastic, are yet finding a chemistry through their alchemy, and bringing out with their heap of dross grain after grain of sterling gold. Pending the completion of this process, or its approach to completion, I venture to think the History School must draw largely for its educational value on the two sciences (they should rather be called philosophies) which are associated with History in the School, Jurisprudence and Political Economy.

The forms and practice of the law, the art of the advocate, cannot be studied at a University. Jurisprudence may be and is studied in Universities. In ours, where its shade still hovers, it once flourished so vigorously as to threaten less lucrative though more spiritual studies with extinction, and pointed the high road of ambition to medieval youth. The Viner foundation seems to have been intended to restore its energy by the life-giving virtue of practical utility. But there is evidence that the Viner foundation, like that of Modern History and

Modern Languages, was received with some jealousy as an intruder on the old studies, and it failed of its effect. Otherwise Oxford, perchance, might have had a greater part in that code of the laws of free England which is now beginning to be framed, and which will go forth, instinct with the spirit of English justice, to contend for the allegiance of Europe with the Imperial code of France. In International Law we have had the great name of Stowell, the genuine offspring, in some measure, of sudies pursued here. The great subject of International Law was once connected with my Chair. It is now, happily, in separate hands, and in those hands it is united with Diplomacy—an auspicious conjunction, if we may hope that a school of diplomatists will hence arise to raise diplomacy for ever above that system of chicanery and intrigue of which Talleyrand was the evil deity, and make it the instrument of international justice. Truly great men have always been frank and honest negotiators, and frank and honest negotiation alone becomes a truly great people. "He had no foreign policy," says a French statesman of a great English minister, "but peace, good-will, and justice among nations." A really good and impartial manual of International Law[f] is a work still to be produced. There is the same want of a good manual of the principles of jurisprudence—the principles of jurisprudence in the abstract—and the comparative jurisprudence of different nations. For want of

[f] I do not mean to give currency to the special phrase international *law*, which I suspect is fraught with dangerous fallacy. There can be no law, in the proper sense of the term, where there is no legislator, no tribunal, no means of giving legal effect to a decision.—Note to 2nd Edition.

this we are driven to study some national system of law, either that of the Romans or of our own country. That of the Romans is somewhat remote, and sometimes veils its principles in shapes difficult to pierce, except to a student versed in Roman history. Our own is, as yet, in form barbarous and undigested. But except in so far as it is really, and not only in forms and terms, a relic of feudalism, it covers strong rules of utility and justice, the work of the greatest and most upright tribunals the world ever saw. It is these rules, and not the technicalities or antiquities of English law, that constitute the proper subject of that part of our examinations; especially as, of those who pass through the School, fewer probably will be destined for the actual profession of the law, than to be county magistrates, and administer plain justice to the people.

Political Economy, though once accepted by the University as one of the regular subjects of this Chair, has but one foot, as it were, in the new Examination Statute. The candidates are permitted to include among their subjects the great work of Adam Smith. Few will think that the bounds of safe discretion are exceeded by the permission to know something of economical science thus accorded to students destined, many of them by their birth, more by their wealth or talent, to become the legislators of a great commercial country; and whose errors in economy may bring dearth of bread into every cottage, and with dearth evils that arise when parent and child cannot both be fed. Political Economy is still the object of antipathies, excusable but unfounded. A hypothetical

science, true in the abstract, but not applicable in its rigour to facts, it has been sometimes too rigorously applied; and errors, I believe they are now admitted to be errors, touching the relative laws of population and food, though they originated with minds animated by a sincere love of man, seemed to accuse the providence and contradict the designs of God. Political Economy is guilty of seeking to put an end to the existence of a pauper class. Such a class may in imagination be the kneeling and grateful crowd in the picture, among whom St. Martin divides his cloak; imagination may even endow them with finer moral perceptions than those of other men; but in the reality they are the Lazzaroni who sacked and burned with Masaniello, and the Sans-culottes who butchered with Robespierre. Political Economy, again, is guilty,—not she alone is guilty,—of pronouncing that man must eat his bread in the sweat of his own brow; she is not guilty of denying alms to the helpless and the destitute. "Dr. Adam Smith's conduct in private life," says the author of the sketch prefixed to his great work, "did not belie the generous principles inculcated in his works. He was in the habit of allotting a considerable part of his income to offices of secret charity. Mr. Stewart mentions that he had been made acquainted with some very affecting instances of his beneficence. They were all, he observes, on a scale much beyond what might have been expected from his fortune; and were accompanied with circumstances equally honourable to the delicacy of his feelings and the liberality of his heart." It is false sentiment to talk of a Political Economist as though he were a

religious teacher, but through no sermons does the spirit of true humanity breathe more strongly than through the writings of Adam Smith; nor has any man in his way more effectually preached peace and good will on earth. Neither his voice nor that of any teacher can put mercy into the heart of fanaticism or ambition, but his spirit always wrestles, and wrestles hard and long, with those spirits of cruelty to save the world from war. Again, no rich man need fear that he will learn from Political Economy the moral sophism that luxury may be laudably indulged in because it is good for trade. On the contrary, he will learn to distinguish between productive and unproductive consumption, and the results of each to the community; and he will have it brought home to his mind, more effectually perhaps than by any rhetoric, that if he does live in luxury and indolence, he is a burden to the earth. The words, "I give alms best by spending largely," have indeed been uttered, and they came from a hard, gross heart. But it was the heart not of a Political Economist, but of a Most Christian King. Those words were the answer of Louis XIV. to Madame de Maintenon, when she asked him for alms to relieve the misery of the people; that people whom the ambition and fanaticism of their monarch had burdened with a colossal debt, brought to the verge, and beyond the verge, of famine, and forced to pour out their blood like water on a hundred fields that heresy and democracy might be extirpated, and that the one true religion and the divine pattern of government might be preached to all nations with fire and sword. Once more, it is supposed that Political Economy sanctions hard dealings between class

and class, and between man and man; that it encourages the capitalist to use men as "hands," without fellow-feeling and without mercy; and these charges are found side by side with the sentimental praise of that atrocious system of Vagrancy Laws and Statutes of Labourers by which expiring feudalism strove to bind again its fetters on the half emancipated serf. The poetry of the whip, the branding-iron and the gibbet, to be applied to the labourer wandering in quest of a better market, certainly finds as little response in the dry mind of Political Economy as the poetry of bloody persecutions and judicial murder. But those who wish to find a condemnation of the inhumanity as well as the folly of overworking and underfeeding the labourer, will not have to seek far before they find it in the pages of Adam Smith. Adam Smith, indeed, condemns in the measured language of sober justice; and he takes no distinction, such as we find always tacitly taken in novels and poems by the troubadours of the landed interest, between the grinding manufacturer and the grinding landlord. But perhaps, his sentence will not on either account have less weight with reasonable men. The laws of the production and distribution of wealth are not the laws of duty or affection. But they are the most beautiful and wonderful of the natural laws of God, and through their beauty and their wonderful wisdom they, like the other laws of nature which science explores, are not without a poetry of their own. Silently, surely, without any man's taking thought, if human folly will only refrain from hindering them, they gather, store, dispense, husband, if need be, against scarcity, the wealth of the great community of

nations. They take from the consumer in England the wages of the producer in China, his just wages, and they distribute those wages among the thousand or hundred thousand Chinese workmen who have contributed to the production, justly, to "the estimation of a hair," to the estimation of a fineness far passing human thought. They call on each nation with silent bidding to supply of its abundance that which the other wants, and make all nations fellow-labourers for the common store; and in them lies perhaps the strongest natural proof that the earth was made for the sociable being, man. To buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market, the supposed concentration of economical selfishness, is simply to fulfil the command of the Creator, who provides for all the wants of His creatures through each other's help, to take from those who have abundance and to carry to those who have need. It would be an exaggeration to erect trade into a moral agency; but it does unwittingly serve agencies higher than itself, and make one heart as well as one harvest for the world.

But though the philosophy of this School may, for the present, be drawn mainly from its Jurisprudence and Political Economy, and these will be its most substantial studies, there is another element, which must be supplied by simple narrative history, written picturesquely and to the heart. That element is the ethical element, the training of right sympathies and pure affections, without which no system of education can be perfect, and for want of which mere mathematical or scientific training appears essentially defective. The most highly developed power of the pure intellect, the driest light, to use Bacon's

phrase, of the understanding, will make a great thinker, but it will not make a great man. Statesmen formed by such education would be utterly wanting in emotion and in the power of kindling or guiding it in others. They would be wanting in the aspirations which move men to do great things. History in this new School has to supply the place both of the ancient historians and the poets in the Classical School; and to a great extent it may do so. And perhaps it may be truly said that Oxford, if she is under some disadvantages, possesses some great advantages for the appreciation of historical character and the ethical treatment of history, not merely as a subject of education, but as a literary pursuit; and that she may on this ground well aspire to become a great school of history. We cannot have in this seat of learning the knowledge of the world and of action which produces such histories as those of Thucydides or Tacitus, or even as that of Lord Macaulay, any more than we can have the knowledge of war which produces such a history as that of Napier. But we have in a singular degree the key to moral and spiritual character in all its varieties and in all its aspects. Oxford gives us this key partly as she is a great school of moral philosophy, partly from the events otherwise most injurious to her usefulness. Large spiritual experience, deep insight into character, ample sympathies, —these at least the University has gained by that great storm of religious controversy through which she has just passed, and which has cast the wrecks of her most gifted intellects on every shore. Such gifts go far to qualify their possessor for writing the history of many very important periods, provided only that they are combined

with the love of justice and controlled by common sense.

I have mentioned that the Modern Languages were once united with Modern History in this foundation. They have now separate foundations, but the two studies cannot be divorced. A thorough knowledge of history, even of the history of our own country, is impossible without the power of reading foreign writers. Each nation, in the main, writes its own history best; it best knows its own land, its own institutions, the relative importance of its own events, the characters of its own great men. But each nation has its peculiarities of view, its prejudices, its self-love, which require to be corrected by the impartial or even hostile views of others. We are indignant, or we smile, at the religion of French aggrandisement which displays itself in every page of most French historians, and at the constantly recurring intimation that the progress of civilization, and even of morality in the world, depends on the perpetual acquisition of fresh territory and fresh diplomatic influence by France. Perhaps there are some things, at which a Frenchman might reasonably be indignant or reasonably smile, in the native historians of a country of whose greatness we may be justly, and of whose beneficent action in Europe we may be more justly, proud. Besides, in regard to our early history, much depends upon antiquarian research, and antiquarian research is not the special excellence of our practical nation. So strongly do I feel that the original arrangement by which Modern History and Modern Languages were united was the right one, that I cannot refrain from expressing a hope that the expe-

diency of restoring that arrangement may soon come under the consideration of the Council ; and that one of the most flourishing and most practically useful of our departments may be completely incorporated into our system by becoming a portion of the Modern History School.

Of the importance of Physical Science to the student of Modern History it scarcely becomes me to speak. All I can say is, that I have reason to lament my own ignorance of it at every turn. It is my conviction that man is not the slave, but the lord, of the material world ; that the spirit moulds, and is not moulded by, the clay. I believe that nations, like men, shape their own destiny, let nature rough-hew it as she will. But nature does rough-hew the destiny of nations, and the knowledge of her workings and influences, as they bear on man, is a most essential part of history. The next generation of historical students in Oxford will reach, by the aid of this knowledge, what those of my generation can never attain. The words of Roger Bacon to his pupil, *Tu meliores radices egeris*, "You will strike root deeper and bear fruit higher than your teacher," may be repeated by each generation of intellect to that which is at once its pupil and its heir.

The range of the student's historical reading here must necessarily be limited, and we naturally take as the staple of it the history of our own country. It fortunately happens that the history of our own country is, in one important respect, the best of all historical studies. To say nothing of our claims to greatness, no nation has ever equalled ours in the unbroken continuity of its

national life. The institutions of France before the Revolution are of little practical importance or interest to the Frenchman of the present day: there is almost as great a chasm of political organization and political sentiment between feudal France and the France of Louis XIV. The French Canadian, the surviving relic of France under the old monarchy, is, in everything but race and language, a widely different man from the Frenchman of Paris. But we hear of questions in our youngest colonies being settled by reference to the institutions of Edward the Confessor. The same habits of local self-government which are so much at the root of our political character now, held together English society in the county, the hundred, the parish, the borough, when the central government was dissolved by the civil wars of Henry III., the Wars of the Roses, and the Great Rebellion. It fortunately happens, also, that the main interest of our country lies in the development of our political constitution. England has always been a religious country, both under the old and under the reformed faith. But she has not been the parent of great religious movements, excepting Wycliffism, which proved abortive. She has received her spiritual impulses mainly from without. That to which the mind of the nation has been turned from its birth, and with unparalleled steadiness, is the working out of a political constitution, combining Roman order with Northern liberty, and harmonizing the freest development of individual mind and character with intense national unity and unfailing reverence for the law. The present age seems likely to decide whether this work, so full of the highest effort, moral as well as intellectual,

has been wrought by England for herself alone or for the world.[g] Political greatness is not the end of man, nor is it in political events and institutions that the highest interest of history lies. But when we arrive at the region of the highest interest, we arrive also at the region of the deepest divisions of opinion and of feeling. The English Constitution is accepted by all Englishmen, and its development may be traced in this Chair without treading on forbidden ground. Even with regard to this study, indeed, it is necessary for a Professor of History to warn his pupils that they come to him for knowledge, not for opinions; and that it will be his highest praise if they leave him, with increased materials for judgment, to judge with an open and independent mind. And, happily, in studying the constitutional history of England, modern or medieval, both professor and pupil have before them the noblest model of judicial calmness and inexorable regard for truth, in that great historian of our constitution whom Oxford produced, and who has lately been taken from the place of honour which he long held among our living literary worthies, to be numbered with the illustrious dead.

In my next lecture I propose to speak of the method of studying history. In this I have ventured to plead for support and encouragement, and, what is perhaps most needed of all, proper guidance for our Modern History School.[h] I rest my plea on the fact that there

[g] I speak of the *substance* not of the *forms* of the Constitution. —Note to 2nd Edit.

[h] I confess I have been induced to publish this lecture somewhat late, and contrary to my original intention, by the hope that I

is a class of students destined to perform the most important duties to society in after-life, peculiarly needing education to dispose and enable them to perform those duties, and whose education as a class has hitherto failed; a fact to which I point with less hesitation because I am persuaded that the sense of it led in great measure to the institution of the Modern History School. I do not rest my plea on any particular theory of education, liberal or utilitarian, special or universal, because no theory of education, rationally based on the results of our experience, embracing the subject in all its aspects, and determining the intrinsic value of different studies, their relative effect on the powers of the mind and on the character, and the motives to industry which can be relied on in the case of each, has yet been laid before the world. Let us look the fact in the face. We in this place differ widely in our opinions respecting education; and our difference of opinions respecting education is intimately connected with our difference of opinions respecting deeper things. In this, Oxford is only the reflection of a world torn by controversies, the greatest, perhaps, which have ever agitated mankind. But we are all agreed in the desire to send out, if we can, good landlords, just magistrates, upright and enlightened rulers and legislators for the English people.

may draw the attention of the University to the state of the School of Law and Modern History, left as it is without that superintendence which in its infancy it must require, and little encouraged by the Colleges,—even All Souls having apparently set aside the Parliamentary ordinance by which its fellowships are devoted to the encouragement of the subjects recognized in this School.

[Written in 1859, since which time some Colleges have heartily adopted the study.--Note to 2nd Edit.]

We are all agreed in desiring that the rich men who are educated at Oxford should be distinguished above other rich men by their efforts to tread what to every rich man is the steep path of social duty. And if we did not all vote for the foundation of a School of Law and Modern History with a view to the better education of the gentry, we are all bound to acknowledge and support it now that it is founded. It is hard to adapt medieval and clerical colleges to the purposes of modern and lay education. It is hard, too, to break through the separate unity of the college, a strong bond as it has been, not only of affectionate association, but of duty. Yet I cannot abandon the hope that whatever steps may prove necessary to provide regular and competent instruction in Modern History and the cognate subjects, will be taken by the University in fulfilment of its promise to the nation. I feel still more confident that the co-operation of the Colleges with the staff of the University for this purpose will not be impeded by jealousies between different orders, which were never very rational, and which may now surely be numbered with the past. We have all one work. The Professor is henceforth the colleague of the Tutor in the duties of University education. What he was in the Middle Ages is an antiquarian question. It is clear that since that time his position and duties have greatly changed. The modern Press is the medieval Professor, and it is absurd to think that in these days of universal mental activity and universal publication men can be elected or appointed by Convocation or by the Crown to head the march of thought and give the world new truth.

Oxford herself is no longer what a University was in the Middle Ages.. No more, as in that most romantic epoch of the history of intellect, will the wayworn student, who had perhaps begged his way from the cold shade of feudalism to this solitary point of intellectual light, look down upon the city of Ockham and Roger Bacon as the single emporium of all knowledge, the single gate to all the paths of ambition, with the passionate reverence of the pilgrim, with the joy of the miner who has found his gold. The functions and duties of Oxford are humbler, though still great. And so are those of all who are engaged in her service, and partake the responsibilities of her still noble trust. To discharge faithfully my portion of those duties, with the aid and kind indulgence of those on whose aid and kind indulgence I must always lean, will be my highest ambition while I hold this Chair.



I.

ON THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

THE first question which the student of history has now to ask himself is, Whether history is governed by necessary laws? If it is, it ought to be written and read as a science. It may be an imperfect science as yet, owing to the complexity of the phenomena, the incompleteness of the observations, the want of a rational method; but in its nature it is a science, and is capable of being brought to perfection.

History could not be studied as a whole,—there could be no philosophy of history,—till we thoroughly felt the unity of the human race. That great discovery is one which rebukes the pretensions of individual genius to be the sole source of progress, for it was made not by one man, but by mankind. Kindled by no single mind, it spread over the world like the light of morning; and the prism must be the work of a cunning hand which could discriminate in it the blended rays of duty, interest, and affection. First, perhaps, the greatness of the Roman character broke through the narrow exclusiveness of savage nationality, by bending in its hour of conquest to the intel-

lect of conquered Greece; nobler in this than Greece herself, who, with all her philosophy, talked to the last of Greek and barbarian, and could never see the man beneath the slave. First, perhaps, on the mind of the Roman Stoic the great idea of the community of man, with its universal rights and duties, distinctly though faintly dawned. And therefore to the Roman Stoic it was given to be the real author of Rome's greatest gift, the science of universal law. Christianity broke down far more thoroughly the barriers between nation and nation, between freeman and slave, for those who were within her pale. Between those within and those without the pale she put perhaps a deeper and wider gulf; not in the times of the apostles, but in the succeeding times of fierce conflict with heathen vice and persecution, and still more in the fanatical and crusading Middle Ages. The resurrection of Greece and Rome in the revival of their literature made the world one again, and united at once the Christian to the heathen, and the present to the remotest past. The heathen moralist, teaching no longer in the disguise of a school divine, but in his own person, the heathen historian awakening Christian sympathies, the heathen poet touching Christian hearts, shewed that in morality, in sympathy, in heart, though not in faith, the Christian and the heathen were one. That sense of unity, traversing all distinctions between Christian and pagan, and between the Churches of divided Christendom, has grown with the growth of philosophy, science, jurisprudence, literature, art, the common and indivisible heritage of man. A more

enlightened and humane diplomacy, and the gradual ascendency of international law, have strengthened the sense of common interests and universal justice from which they sprang; and France, the eldest daughter of the Church, has crusaded to save the Crescent from the aggression of the Cross. Commerce, too, breaking link by link its medieval fetters, has helped to knit nations together in sympathy as well as by interest, and to remove the barriers of the dividing mountains and the estranging sea. There was needed, besides, a great and varied range of recorded history to awaken thoroughly the historic sense, to furnish abundant matter for historical reflection, and to arouse a lively curiosity as to the relation between the present and the past. There was needed a habit of methodical investigation, with a view to real results, of which physical science is the great school. There was needed a knowledge, which could only come from the same source, of the physical conditions and accessories of man's estate. These conditions fulfilled, the philosophy of history was born; and its birth opens a new realm of thought, full, we can scarcely doubt, of great results for man. Vico indeed was the precursor of this philosophy. In his mind first arose the thought, awakened by the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, that history should be read as a whole, and that this whole might have a law. But the law he imagined, that of revolving cycles of men and events, was wild and fruitless as a dream.

It was natural that physical science should claim the philosophy of history as a part of her own domain, that

she should hasten to plant her flag upon this newly-discovered land of thought. Flushed with unhoped for triumphs, why should she not here also triumph beyond hope? She scorns to see her advance arrested by the imagined barrier between the physical and moral world. The phenomena of man's life and history are complicated indeed, more complicated even than those of the tides or of the weather; but the phenomena of the tides and of the weather have yielded or are yielding to close observation, well recorded statistics, and patient reasoning; why should not the phenomena of man's actions yield too, and life and history be filled, like all the world besides, with the calm majesty of natural law? It is a grand thought; and at this time it finds not only minds open to its grandeur, but hearts ready to welcome it. Western Christendom has long been heaving with a mighty earthquake of opinion, only less tremendous than that of the Reformation because there was no edifice so vast and solid as medieval Catholicism to be laid low by the shock. Some their fear of this earthquake has driven to take refuge in ancient fanes, and by altars whose fires are cold. Others are filled with a Lucretian longing to repose under the tranquil reign of physical necessity, to become a part of the material world, and to cast their perplexities on the popes and hierarchs of science and her laws. Only let them be sure that what is august and tranquillizing in law really belongs to science, and that it is not borrowed by her from another source. Let them be sure that in putting off the dignity, they also put off the

burden of humanity. If man is no higher in his destinies than the beast or the blade of grass, it may be better to be a beast or a blade of grass than a man.

History is made up of human actions, whether those actions are political, social, religious, military, or of any other kind. The founding and maintaining of institutions, the passing and keeping of laws, the erecting and preserving of churches and forms of worship, the instituting and observing of social customs, may be all resolved into the element of action. So may all intellectual history, whether of speculation, observation, or composition, with their products and effects; the bending of the mind to thought being in every respect as much an action as the moving of the hand. What we call national actions are the actions of a multitude of men acting severally though concurrently, and with all the incidents of several action; or they are the actions of those men who are in power. Whatever there is in action, therefore, will be everywhere present in history; and the founders of the new physical science of history have to lay the foundations of their science in what seems the quicksand of free-will.

This difficulty they have to meet either by shewing that free-will is an illusion, or by shewing that its presence throughout history is compatible, in spite of all appearances, with the existence of an exact historical science.

They take both lines. Some say, "Free-will is an illusion, or, at least, we cannot be sure that it is real-

Our only knowledge of it is derived from consciousness, and it is by no means certain that consciousness is a faculty. It is very likely only a state or condition of the mind. Besides, the mind cannot observe itself: it is not in nature that the same thing should be at once observer and observed."

It signifies little under what technical head we class consciousness. The question is, from what source do those who repudiate its indications derive the knowledge of their own existence? From what other source do they derive the knowledge that their words, the very words they use in this denial, correspond to their thoughts, and will convey their thoughts to others? The mind may not be able to place itself on the table before it, or look at itself through a microscope, and there may be nothing else in nature like its power of self-observation; possibly the term self-observation, being figurative, may not adequately represent the fact, and may even, if pressed, involve some confusion of ideas. But he is scarcely a philosopher who fancies that the peculiarity of a mental fact, or our want of an adequate name for it, is a good reason for setting the fact aside. The same writers constantly speak of the phenomena of mind; so that it appears there must be some phenomena of mind which they have been able to observe. In whose mind did they see these phenomena? Did they see them in the minds of others, or, by self-observation, in their own?

But others say, "We admit the reality of free-will; but the opposite to free-will is necessity, and to form the foundation of our science we do not want neces-

sity, but only causation and the certainty which causation carries with it: necessity is a mysterious and embarrassing word, let us put it out of the question." But then, if necessity does not mean the certain connexion between cause and effect, what is it to mean? Is the word to be sent adrift on the dictionary without a meaning? The rooted contradiction in our minds between the notion of freedom of action and that of being bound by the chain of certain causation, is not to be removed merely by denying us the use of the term by which the contradiction is expressed.

But again, they say "You may as well get over this apparent contradiction in life and history between free-will and certain science, for you must get over the apparent contradiction in life and history between free-will and the certain omniscience of the Creator, which comprehends human actions, and which you acknowledge as part of your religious faith." No doubt this, though an *argumentum ad hominem*, is perfectly relevant, because the objection it meets is one in the minds of those to whom it is addressed; and I think it has been justly observed, that it cannot be answered by distinguishing between foreknowledge and afterknowledge, because its force lies in the certainty which is common to all knowledge, not in the relation of time between the knowledge and the thing known. The real answer seems to be this, that the words omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, though positive in form, are negative in meaning. They mean only that we know not the bounds of the knowledge, power, or presence of God. What we do know, if we know anything, is that His presence is

not such as to annihilate or absorb our separate being, nor His knowledge and power such as to overrule or render nugatory our free-will.

Nor will it avail the constructors of a science of Man to cite the moral certainty with which we predict the conduct of men or nations whose characters are settled. This settled character was formed by action, and the action by which it was formed was free ; so that the uncertain element which baffles science is not got rid of, but only thrown back over a history or a life.

Then they analyse action, and say it follows its motive, and may be predicted from the motive, just as any other consequent in nature follows and may be predicted from its antecedent. It follows *a* motive, but how are we to tell *which* motive it will follow ? Action is a choice between motives ; even in our most habitual acts it is a choice between acting and rest. The only ground we have for calling one motive the strongest is that it has prevailed before ; but the motive which has prevailed before, and prevailed often and long, is set aside in every great change of conduct, individual or national, by an effort of the will, for which, to preserve the chain of causation and the science founded on that chain, some other antecedent must be found.

Action, we said, was a choice between motives. It is important in this inquiry to observe that it is a choice between them, not a compound or a resultant of them all ; so that a knowledge of all the motives present at any time to the mind of a man or nation would not enable us to predict the action as we predict the result of a combination of chemical elements or mechanical

forces. The motive which is not acted on goes for nothing; and as that motive may be and often is the one which—according to the only test we have, that of the man's previous actions—is the strongest, we see on what sort of foundation a science of action and history must build.

When the action is done, indeed, the connexion between it and its motive becomes necessary and certain; and we may argue backwards from action to motive with all the accuracy of science. Finding at Rome a law to encourage tyrannicide, we are certain that there had been tyrants at Rome, though there is nothing approaching to historical evidence of the tyranny of Tarquin.

Those who would found history or ethics on a necessarian, or, if they will, a causal theory of action, have three things to account for,—our feeling at the moment of action that we are free to do or not to do,—our approving or blaming ourselves afterwards for having done the act or left it undone, which implies that we were free, —and the approbation or blame of each other, which implies the same thing. I do not see that they even touch any of these problems but the first. They do not tell us whether conscience is an illusion or not; nor, if it is not an illusion, do they attempt to resolve for us the curious question, what this strange pricking in the heart of a mere necessary agent means. They do not explain to us why we should praise or blame, reward or punish, each other's good or bad actions, any more than the good or bad effects of anything in the material world; why the virtues and vices of man are to be treated on a totally different footing from the virtues of food or the vices of

poison. Praise and blame they do,—praise as heartily and blame at least as sharply as the rest of the world—but they do not tell us why. We must not be deceived by the forms of scientific reasoning, when those who use them do not face the facts.

Great stress is laid by the Necessarians on what are called moral statistics. It seems that, feel as free as we may, our will is bound by a law compelling the same number of men to commit the same number of crimes within a certain cycle. The cycle, curiously enough, coincides with the period of a year which is naturally selected by the Registrar-general for his reports. But, first, the statistics tendered are not moral, but legal. They tell us only the outward act, not its inward moral character. They set down alike under Murder the act of a Rush or a Palmer, and the act of an Othello. Secondly, we are to draw some momentous inference from the uniformity of the returns. How far are they uniform? M. Quetelet gives the number of convictions in France for the years 1826, '7, '8, '9, severally as 4348, 4236, 4551, 4475. The similarity is easily accounted for by that general uniformity of human nature which we all admit. How is the difference, amounting to more than 300 between one year and the next, to be accounted for except by free-will? But, thirdly, it will be found that these statistics are, unconsciously but effectually, garbled. To prove the law of the uniformity of crime, periods are selected when crime was uniform. Instead of four years of the Restoration, in which we know very well there was no great outburst of wickedness, give us a table including the civil war between the Burgundians and the

Armagnacs, the St. Bartholomew, the Reign of Terror, or the days of June 1848. It will be said, perhaps, that this was under different circumstances; but it is a very free use of the term "circumstance" to include in it all the evil and foolish actions of men which lead to, or are committed in, a sanguinary revolution. Social and criminal statistics are most valuable; the commencement of their accurate registration will probably be a great epoch in the history of legislation and government; but the reason why they are so valuable is that they are not fixed by necessity, as the Necessarians allege or insinuate, but variable, and may be varied for the better by the wisdom of governments,—governments which Necessarians are always exhorting to reform themselves, instead of shewing how their goodness or badness necessarily arises from the climate or the food. If the statistics were fixed by necessity, to collect them would be a mere indulgence of curiosity, like measuring all the human race, when we could not add a cubit to their stature.

It is important, when people talk of calculating the probabilities and chances of human action on these statistics, to guard against a loose use (which I think I have seen somewhere noted) of the words probability and chance. Probability relates to human actions, which cannot be calculated unless you can find a certain antecedent for the will. Chance is mere ignorance of physical causes; ignorance in what order the cards will turn up, because we are ignorant in what order they are turned down: and it is difficult to see by what manipulation, out of mere ignorance, knowledge can be educed. It is worth remarking also that an average is not a law:

not only so, but the taking an average rather implies that no law is known.

But, it may be said, all must give way to a law gathered by fair and complete induction from the facts of history. It is perhaps not so clear why knowledge drawn from within ourselves should give way to knowledge drawn from without. But be that as it may, we may pronounce at once that a complete induction from the facts of history is impossible. History cannot furnish its own inductive law. An induction, to be sound, must take in, actually or virtually, all the facts. But history is unlike all other studies in this, that she never can have, actually or virtually, all the facts before her. What is past she knows in part; what is to come she knows not, and can never know. The scroll from which she reads is but half unrolled: and what the other half contains, what even the next line contains, no one has yet been able to foretell. Prediction, the crown of all science, the new science of Man and History has not ventured to put on; that prerogative, which is the test of her legitimacy, she has not yet ventured to exert

Science indeed, far from indicating that the materials for the great induction are complete, would, if anything, rather lead us to believe that the human race and its history are young. The vast length of geologic, compared with the shortness of historic time, whispers that the drama for which the stage was so long preparing must have many acts still to come.

This ignorance of what is to come destroys, it would seem, among other inductive theories of history, the famous one of Comte, who makes the course of history

to be determined by the progress of science through its three stages, "Theological," "Metaphysical," and "Positive;"—"Positive" having, let us observe, a double meaning, *atheistical* and *sound*, so that the use of it, in effect, involves a continual begging of the question. How can M. Comte tell that the "Positive" era is the end of all? How can he tell that the three stages he has before him are anything but a mere segment of a more extensive law? But besides this, before we proceed to compare a colossal hypothesis with the facts, we must see whether it is rational in itself, and consistent with our previous knowledge. An hypothesis accounting for certain facts by reference to the sun's motion round the earth, or anything else obviously false or absurd, may be dismissed at once, without the form of verification. The three terms of the supposed series, the Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive states, must be distinct and successive, or it will be no series at all. Now taking "Positive" in the fair sense, the sense of *sound* Theology and Positive Science, the theological and the scientific view of the world are neither distinct nor successive, but may very well go, and do often go, together. A man may be, and Newton was, a sound astronomer and a great discoverer of astronomical laws, and yet believe that the stars were made and are held in their courses by the hand of God. A man may be, and Butler was, a sound moral philosopher and a great discoverer of the laws of human nature, and yet believe human nature to be in its origin and end divine. Positivists cite for our admiration a saying of Lamennais, contrasting, as they suppose, the religious with the scientific view of things. "Why do

bodies gravitate towards each other? Because God willed it, said the ancients. Because they attract each other, says Science." As though God could not will that bodies should attract each other. Polytheism, putting the different parts of nature under the arbitrary dominion of separate gods, conflicts with, and has been overthrown by, Science, which proves that one set of laws, the work of one God, traverses the whole. And this, I venture to think, is the mustard-seed of truth out of which the vast tree of M. Comte's historical theory has grown. So far from there being any conflict between Monotheism and Science, all the discoveries of science confirm the hypothesis that the world was made by one God; an hypothesis which, it should be observed, was quite independent of the progress of science, since it had been promulgated in the first chapter of Genesis before science came into existence. As to the Metaphysical era, which is the intervening term of the series between the Theological and the Positive, nothing in history corresponding to this era has been or can be produced. No age is or can be pointed out in which a nation or mankind believed the phenomena of the world or of human nature to be produced by metaphysical entities. A few philosophers indeed have talked of nature as the mother of all things; but by nature they meant not a metaphysical entity, but either the laws of matter personified, in which case they were Positivists, or the God of natural religion as opposed to the God of revelation, in which case they were Theists. So that of the three terms of the supposed series, the first runs into the third and the second vanishes altogether. The theory is open to another objection, which is also

fatal. Against all the facts, though in accordance with the bias naturally given to M. Comte's mind by his scientific pursuits, it makes the scientific faculties and tendencies predominant in man. Which view of science was it that predominated in Attila and Timour, who, after all, played a considerable part in determining the course of history?

What has been said as to the incompleteness of the phenomena of history, and the consequent impossibility of a final induction as to its law, leads to a remark on the theory that "Man is to be studied historically," and its necessary corollary that mortality is not absolute but historical. If there can be no complete historical induction, and if, at the same time, Man is to be studied historically, not morally, and the rule of right action is to be taken, not from our moral instincts but from the observation of historical facts, it it difficult to see how there can be any rule of right action at all. Morality and our moral judgment of characters and actions must, it would seem, always remain in suspense, till the world ends and history is complete. History of itself, if observed as science observes the facts of the physical world, can scarcely give man any principle or any object of allegiance, unless it be success. Success accordingly enters very largely into the morality of the thorough-going Positivist. He canonizes conquerors and despots, and consigns to infamy the memory of men who, though they fell, fell struggling for a noble cause, and have left a great and regenerating example to mankind. The morality, not only absolute but mystical, which Positivism in its second phase has adopted to satisfy moral instincts, is a

mere copy of the social aspect of Christianity; as the Church, the sacraments, and the priesthood, invented to satisfy our religious instincts, are a mere copy of the Church of Rome.

You may say that virtue has prevailed in history over vice, and that our allegiance is due to it as the stronger. But granting that it has prevailed hitherto, to say which is the stronger you must see the end of the struggle. The theologian who, like Hobbes, makes religion consist not in our moral sympathy with the Divine nature, but in necessary submission to Divine power, will find himself in the same dilemma. He claims our allegiance for the power of good, not on the ground of our sympathy with good, but because it is stronger than the power of evil. He, too, before he says which is the stronger, must see the end of the struggle. If evil prevails, his allegiance must be transferred.

It is true that morality in judging the past must take notice of historical circumstances, as morality takes notice of present circumstances in judging the actions of living men. Allowance must be made for the age, the country, the state of things in which each character moved. In this sense (and it is a most important sense), there may be said to be such a thing as historical, in contradistinction to an absolute, morality; though a morality which disregarded the circumstances of actions in history or life would deserve to be called not absolute but idiotic, and, in fact, has never been propounded. But let the merit or demerit of an historical action vary ever so much with the circumstances, justice has been justice, mercy has been mercy, honour has been honour,

good faith has been good faith, truthfulness has been truthfulness, from the beginning; and each of these qualities is one and the same in the tent of the Arab and in the senates of civilized nations. A sound historical morality will sanction strong measures in evil times; selfish ambition, treachery, murder, perjury, it will never sanction in the worst of times, for these are the things that make times evil.

Again, institutions not good in themselves may be good for certain times and countries; they may be better than what went before, they may pave the way for something better to follow. Despotism is an improvement on anarchy, and may lead to ordered freedom. But there must be limits to our catholicity in the case of institutions as well as in the case of actions. Our sympathy here, too, is bounded by morality. It is just possible it may embrace the institution of slavery, if slavery was really a middle term between wars of extermination and a free industrial system; though it is almost impossible to imagine how slavery could ever be otherwise than injurious to the character of the slave-owner, whatever it might be to that of the slave. But cannibalism, which certain theories would lead us philosophically to accept as useful and amiable in its place, must have been execrable everywhere and in all times.

So, again, it is most true that there is a general connexion between the different parts of a nation's civilization; call it, if you will, a *consensus*, provided that the notion of a set of physical organs does not slip in with that term. And it is most true that the civilization of each nation must, to a certain extent, run its own course.

It is folly to force on the most backward nations the laws and government of the most forward, or to offer intellectual institutions to tribes which have not attained the arts of life. But that which is good for all may be given to all, and among the things which are good for all are pure morality and true religion. We cannot at once give a British constitution to the Hindoo; but we may at once, in spite of *consensus* and necessary development, teach him the virtue of truth and the unity of God. The thing may be impossible in the eye of the positive science of history; it is done with difficulty, but it is done.

We have admitted that the philosophy of history is indebted to physical science for habits of methodical reasoning with a view to practical results. From physical science dealing, however wrongly, with history, we also gain a certain calmness and breadth of view, derived from regions in which there is no partizanship or fanaticism, because there are no interests by which partizanship or fanaticism can be inflamed. It is less easy to acknowledge that the student of history is indebted to the physical school of historical philosophy for enlarging our historical sympathies. That school, on the contrary, extinguishes all sympathy in any obvious sense of the word. We can feel love and gratitude for free effort made in the cause of man; but how can we feel love or gratitude towards the human organ of a necessary progress, any more than towards a happy geological formation or a fertilizing river? On the other hand, it would be easy to give specimens of the sort of sympathy and the sort of language which results from taking a purely

scientific view of history and man. "Truth does not regard consequences," was a noble saying; but there are some cases in which the consequences are a test of truth. As the physical view of character and action, if it really took possession of the mind, must put an end to self-exertion, so the physical view of the history of nations would dissolve the human family by making each nation regard the other as in a course of necessary progress, to be studied scientifically, but not to be hastened or interfered with, instead of their doing all they can to enlighten and improve each other.

We must not suppose that because the order of national actions is often necessary, the actions themselves are. A nation may have to go through one stage of knowledge or civilization before it can reach another, but its going through either is still free. Nations must accumulate a certain degree of wealth before they can have leisure to think or write; but the more degraded and indolent races refuse to accumulate wealth.

We must guard, too, against physical metaphors in talking of history; they bring with them physical ideas, and prejudice our view of the question. Men do not act in *masses*, but in multitudes, each man of which has a will of his own, and determines his action by that will, though on the same motives as the rest. Development is a word proper to physical organs, which cannot be transferred to the course of a nation without begging the whole question. The same thing may be said of social statics and dynamics applied to the order and progress of a nation.

Of course, in hesitating to accept the physical view of

man, and the exact science founded on that view, we do not deny or overlook the fact, that besides the character and actions of particular men, there is a common human nature, on the general tendencies of which, considered in the abstract, the Moral and Economical Sciences are founded. In themselves, and till they descend into the actions of particular men or nations, these sciences are exact, and give full play to all those methods of scientific reasoning, of which, once more, physical science seems to be the great school. But let them descend into the actions of particular men and nations, and their exactness ceases. The most exact of them, naturally, is Political Economy, which deals with the more animal part of human nature, where the tendencies are surer because the conflict of motives is less. Yet even in Political Economy no single proposition can be enunciated, however true in the general, which is not constantly falsified by individual actions. It seems doubtful whether the tendencies are surer in the case of nations than in the case of men. The course of a nation is often as eccentric, as wayward, as full of heroic and fiendish impulse, as impossible to predict from year to year, from hour to hour, as that of a man. The passions of men are not always countervailed and nullified by those of other men in a nation, they are often intensified by contagion to the highest degree, and national panic or enthusiasm goes far beyond that of single men. The course of nations, too, is liable to the peculiar disturbing influence of great men, who are partly made by, but who also partly make, their age. A grain more of sand, said Pascal,—say rather a grain less of resolution,—in the

brain of Cromwell, one more pang of doubt in the tossed and wavering soul of Luther, and the current of England or the world's history had been changed. The Positivists themselves, though it is their aim to exhibit all history as the result of general laws, are so far from excluding personal influences, that they have made a kind of hagiology and demonology of eminent promoters of progress and eminent reactionists, as though these, rather than the laws, ruled the whole; and no higher, not to say more fabulous, estimate of the personal influence of Richelieu and Burke will be found than in the work of a Positivist author who has treated all personal history as unphilosophical gossip, henceforth to be superseded by histories written on a philosophical method. Accidents too, mere accidents,—the bullet which struck Gustavus on the field of Lutzen, the chance by which the Russian lancers missed Napoleon in the churchyard of Eylau, the chance which stopped Louis XVI. in his flight at Varennes and carried him back to the guillotine,—turn the course of history as well as of life, and baffle, to that extent, all law, all tendency, all prevision.

There are some other views, rather than theories, of history, besides the strictly Necessarian theory, which conflict with free-will, and which may be just noticed here.

One is the view, if it should not be rather called a play of fancy, which treats all nations as stereotyped embodiments of an idea, or the phases of an idea, which is assumed to have been involved in the original scheme of things. China, which is naturally first fixed on in applying this hypothesis to the facts of history, may by a

stretch of imagination be taken to embody a stereotyped idea, though even in China there has been change, and indeed progress, enough to belie the notion. But as to all the more progressive nations, this view is so palpably contradicted by the most glaring facts, that we need hardly go further. We may dispense with asking how an idea, which never was present to any mind but that of a modern philosopher, became embodied in the actions which make up the history of a nation : how it passed in its different phases from nation to nation, and how it happens that its last phase exactly coincides with our time. The half-poetic character of this view is apparent, when we are told that the reason for beginning with China is, that the light of civilization, as well as the light of the sun, must rise in the East ; as though the sun rose in China ! Here, in fact, we see Metaphysical Philosophy, as well as Physical Science, attempting to extend its empire over a domain which is not its own.

Other writers erect some one physical influence, the influence of race, of climate, of food, into a sort of destiny of nations. The importance of these influences is great, and to trace them is a task full of interest and instruction. But man is the same in his moral and intellectual essence, that is, in his sovereign part, whatever his stock, whether he live beneath African suns or Arctic frosts, whether his food be flesh, corn, or a mixture of the two. He is not, as these theorists would make him, the most helpless, but the most helpful of animals ; and by his mind, applied to building, warming, clothing, makes his own climate ; by his mind, applied to husbandry and commerce, modifies his own food. Race

seems, of all physical influences, the strongest. Yet how small and superficial is the difference, compared with the agreement, between a cultivated man and a good Christian from London and one from Paris, or even between one from either of those places and one from Benares. The prevailing fashion for degrading humanity to mere clay, and levelling it with the other objects of physical science, is liable, like other prevailing fashions, to lead to exaggeration. Confident deductions, of the most sweeping and momentous kind, are made from a statement of physical fact. The statement is overthrown.[a] Yet the deductions are not withdrawn; and the world in its present mood seems not unwilling to believe that the destruction of the proof leaves the theory founded on it still generally true.

There is also a floating notion that the lives of nations are limited by some mysterious law, and that they are born, grow to maturity, and die like men. But the life of a nation is a metaphorical expression. No reason can be given why a nation should die; and no nation ever has died, though some have been killed by external force.

Parallels between the political courses of nations are also sometimes pressed too far, and made to seem like a necessary law. Some of the little states of Greece ran a remarkably parallel course, but they were not independent of each other; they were all members of the Greek nation, and influenced each other's politics by contagion, and sometimes by direct interference. A parallel, which seemed curiously exact, was also drawn between the events of the English and French Revolutions; it

[a] See the Edinburgh Review, vol. cvii. pp. 468, 9. (April 1858.)

seemed to hold till the accession of Louis Philippe, but where is it now? The similarity between the two Revolutions was in truth superficial, compared with their dissimilarity. Religion, the main element of the English movement, was wanting in the French; the flight of the nobility, the confiscation of their estates, and the establishment of a new peasant proprietary, which decided the ultimate character and destiny of the French movement, were wanting in the English. So far as there was a similarity, it was produced partly by mere general tendencies, which lead to anarchy after gross mis-government, to a dictatorship after anarchy, and to the attempt to recover freedom after a dictatorship; partly by mere accidents, such as the want of a son and heir in the case both of Charles II. and of Louis XVIII., and the consequent reversion of the crown to a brother, who belonged by age and education to the old state of things. Had Monmouth been Charles' legitimate son, all probably would have been changed.

Lastly, there is the habit of tracing special acts of Providence in history. This sometimes goes the length of making history one vast act of special Providence, and turning it into a puppet-play, which, our hearts suggest, might have been played with other puppets, less sensible of pain and misery than Man. Surely it is perilous work to be reading the most secret counsels of the Creator by a light always feeble, often clouded by prejudice, often by passion. The massacre of St. Bartholomew seemed a special act of Providence to the papal party of the day. Are *Te Deums* for bloody victories in reality less profane? Is the scoff of Frederic true, and is Providence

always with the best drilled grenadiers? To a believer in Christianity nothing seems so like a special act of Providence as the preparation made for the coming of Christianity through the preceding events in the history of Greece and Rome, on which a preacher was eloquently enlarging to us the other day. To a believer in Christianity it seems so. But those who do not believe in Christianity say, 'Yes, that is the true account of the matter. Christianity arose from a happy confluence of the Greek and Roman with the Hebrew civilization. This is the source of that excellence you call divine.' Thus what appears to one side a singular proof of the special interposition of Providence, is used on the other side, and necessarily with equal force, to shew that Christianity itself is no special interposition of Providence at all, but the natural result of the historical events by which it was ushered into the world. The Duke of Weimar spoke more safely when he said of the tyranny of the first Napoleon in Germany, "It is unjust, and therefore it cannot last." He would have spoken more safely still if he had said, 'Last or not last, it is unjust, and being unjust, it carries its own sentence in its heart, and will prove the weakest in the sum of things.'

Is history, then, a chaos because it has no necessary law? Is there no philosophy of history because there is no science?

There are two grand facts with which the philosophy of history deals,—the division of nations and the succession of ages. Are these without a meaning? If so, the two greatest facts in the world are alone meaningless.

It is clear that the division of nations has entered deeply into the counsels of creation. It is secured not only by barriers of sea, mountains, rivers, intervening deserts,—barriers which conquest, the steam-vessel, and the railroad might surmount,—but also by race, by language, by climate, and other physical influences, so potent that each in its turn has been magnified into the key of all history. The division is perhaps as great and as deeply rooted as it could be without destroying the unity of mankind. Nor is it hard to see a reason for it. If all mankind were one state, with one set of customs, one literature, one code of laws, and this state became corrupted, what remedy, what redemption would there be? None, but a convulsion which would rend the frame of society to pieces, and deeply injure the moral life which society is designed to guard. Not only so, but the very idea of political improvement might be lost, and all the world might become more dead than China. Nations redeem each other. They preserve for each other principles, truths, hopes, aspirations, which, committed to the keeping of one nation only, might, as frailty and error are conditions of man's being, become extinct for ever. They not only raise each other again when fallen, they save each other from falling; they support each other's steps by sympathy and example; they moderate each other's excesses and extravagances, and keep them short of the fatal point by the mutual action of opinion, when the action of opinion is not shut out by despotic folly. They do for each other nationally very much what men of different characters do for each other morally in the intercourse of life; and that they might

do this, it was necessary that they should be as they are, and as the arrangements of the world secure their being, at once like and unlike—like enough for sympathy, unlike enough for mutual correction. Conquest, therefore, may learn that it has in the long run to contend not only against morality but against nature. Two great attempts have been made in the history of the world to crush the nationality of large groups of nations, forming the civilized portion of the globe. The first was made by the military Rome of antiquity; the second, of a qualified kind, was made by the ecclesiastical Rome of the Middle Ages, partly by priestly weapons, partly by the sword of devout kings. The result was universal corruption, political and social in the first case, ecclesiastical in the second. In both cases aid was brought, and the fortunes of humanity were restored by a power from without, but for which, it would seem, the corruption would have been hopeless. In the first case, the warlike tribes of the North shivered the yoke of Rome, and after an agony of six centuries, restored the nations. In the second case, Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand, and breathed into the kindred spirits of the great Teutonic races such love of free enquiry and of liberty, that they rose and rent the bonds of Rome and her Celtic vassals,—rent them, but at the cost of a convulsion which filled the world with blood, and has made mutual hatred almost the law of Christendom from that hour to this. Without the help of Greece it does not appear that the gate of the tomb in which Europe lay would ever have been forced back. She might have been pent in it for ever, like the doomed spirits in Dante

when the lid of their sepulchres is closed at the last day. Wickliffe and John Huss spent their force against it in vain. The tyranny might have been differently shared between the different powers of the universal Church, between Pope and Council, between Pope and King; but this change would have done little for liberty and truth. Nationality is not a virtue, but it is an ordinance of nature and a natural bond; it does much good; in itself it prevents none; and the experience of history condemns every attempt to crush it, when it has once been really formed.

To pass to the other grand fact with which the philosophy of history deals—the succession of ages. It is clear that the history of the race, or at least of the principal portion of it, exhibits a course of moral, intellectual, and material progress; and that this progress is natural, being caused by the action of desires and faculties implanted in the nature of man. It is natural, but it is not like any progress caused by a necessary law. It is a progress of effort, having all the marks of effort as clearly as the life of a man struggling and stumbling towards wisdom and virtue; and it is as being a progress of effort, not a necessary development, that its incidents, revealed in his history, engage our interest and touch our hearts.

There seems to be nothing in the fact of progress either degrading to human dignity or pampering to human pride. The assertion that history began in fetichism and cannibalism, is made without a shadow of proof. Those states are assumed, at a venture, to have been the first, because they seem to be the lowest; the possibi-

lity of their being not original states, but diseases, being left out of sight. As to fetichism, the first hunter or shepherd who swore to another and disappointed him not, though it were to his own hindrance, must have felt the supernatural sanction of duty, and the eternity of moral as contrasted with physical evil; and, therefore, he must implicitly have believed in the two great articles of natural religion,—God and the immortality of the soul. It is *mythology*, of which fetichism is the lowest form, that has its root in nature. *Religion* has its root in man; and man can never have been without religion, however perverted his idea of God, and however degraded his worship may have been. As to cannibalism, it seems to be sometimes a frenzy of the warlike passions, sometimes a morbid tendency engendered by the want, in certain islands, of animal food. At all events, it is most unlikely that the original food of man should have been that which is not only the most loathsome but the most difficult to obtain, since he would have to overcome an animal as strong and as cunning as himself. Besides, how could the human race have multiplied if they had lived upon each other?

On the other hand, as progress does not imply a state worse than the brutes at the beginning, so it does not imply perfection in the end; though it is not for us to limit the degree of knowledge or excellence which it may have pleased the Creator to render attainable at last by man. This doctrine, in truth, checks our pride by putting each generation, ours among the number, in its true place. It teaches us that we are the heirs of the past, and that to that heritage we shall add a little,

and but a little, before we bequeath it to the future; that we are not the last or the greatest birth of time; that all the ages have not wandered in search of truth that we might find it pure and whole; that we must plant in the hope that others will reap the fruit; that we must hand on the torch,—brighter, if we do our part,—but that we must hand it on; and that no spasmodic effort will bring us in our span of life and labour to the yet far-off goal.

But, welcome or unwelcome, the progress of humanity down to the present time is a fact. Man has advanced in the arts of life, in the wealth which springs from them, in the numbers which they support, and with the increase of which the aggregate powers and sympathies of the race increase. He has advanced in knowledge, and still advances, and that in the accelerating ratio of his augmented knowledge added to his powers. So much is clear; but then it is said, "The progress is intellectual only, not moral; we have discoveries of the intellect increasing in number and value from age to age, whose authors are the proper and sole objects of the world's gratitude and love. We have no moral improvement; the moral nature of man remains the same from the beginning, with the same passions and affections, good and evil, which it is confidently added are always in equilibrium. The moral law is the same for all ages and nations; nothing has been added to the Decalogue." This theory is carried as far as it well can be when it is laid down, not only that the progress of humanity is a progress of the intellect alone, but that the progressive virtue of the intellect lies in scepticism or doubt, the

state of mind which suspends all action ; and when it is further laid down that moral virtue, so far from causing the progress of humanity, sometimes impedes it, the proof of which is the mischief done in the world by good men who are bigots,—as though bigots were good men.

That morality and man's moral nature remain the same throughout history, is true ; it is true also that morality and the moral nature remain the same throughout man's life, from his birth to his old age. But character does not remain the same ; the character of the man is continually advancing through life ; and in like manner the character of the race advances through history. The moral and spiritual experience of the man grows from age to age, as well as his knowledge, and produces a deeper and maturer character as it grows. Part of this experience is recorded in religious books, the writings of philosophers, essays, poetry, works of sentiment, tales,—a class of literature which must seem useless and unmeaning to those who hold that our progress is one of science alone. Part of it is silently transmitted, with its increase, through the training which each generation gives to the next. We ask why the ancients thought and wrote so little about the beauties of nature ? It certainly was not that they lived in a land less beautiful, or saw its beauties with eyes less keen than ours. But the love of natural beauties is not only in the eye ; it requires a certain maturity of sentiment to call out the mute sympathy with which nature is charged for man, to lend their mystery to the forest and the sea, its pensiveness to evening, its moral to the year. When a modern, instead of writing modern poetry, imitates, however skilfully,

the poetry of the Greeks, how great is the sacrifice of all that most touches our hearts; and yet how much that is beyond the range of Greek sentiment remains! Philanthropy is a Greek word, but how wide a circle of ideas, sentiments, affections, unknown to the Greeks, does its present meaning embrace! In natural religion itself the progress seems not less clear. Man's idea of God must rise as he sees more of Him in His works, as he sees more of Him by reflecting on his own nature, (in which the true proof of natural religion lies,) and in those efforts of human virtue in other men which would be unaccountable if there were no God, and this world were all. More and more, too, from age to age, the ideas of the soul and of a future life rise in distinctness; Man feels more and more that he is a traveller between the cradle and the grave, and that the great fact of life is death; and the centre of human interest moves gradually towards the other world. Man would perhaps have been paralyzed in his early struggle with nature for subsistence, had these deep thoughts then taken too much possession of his mind. His earliest and coarsest wants satisfied, he began to feel other wants, to think of himself and his own destinies, and to enter on a distinct spiritual life. Those at least began to do so who had leisure, power of mind, and cultivation enough to think, and the reach of whose intellects made them feel keenly the narrow limit of this life. Yet the spiritual life was confined to few, and even in those few it was not of a very earnest kind. The *Phædo* is a graceful work of philosophic art, rather than a very passionate effort to overcome the grave. The Greek, for the most part, rose

lightly from the banquet of life to pass into that unknown land with whose mystery speculation had but dallied, and of which comedy had made a jest. The Roman lay down almost as lightly to rest after his course of public duty. But now, if Death could really regain his victory in the mind of man, hunger and philosophy together would hardly hold life in its course. The latest and most thoroughgoing school of materialism has found it necessary to provide something for man's spiritual nature, and has made a shadowy divinity out of the abstract being of humanity, and a shadowy immortality of the soul out of a figment that the dead are greater than the living. Lucretius felt no such need.

If it could be said that there was no progress in human character because the moral law and the moral nature of man remain the same in all ages, it might equally be said that there could be no variety in character because the moral law and our moral nature are the same in all persons. But the variety of characters which our hearts, bound to no one type, acknowledge as good, noble, beautiful, is infinite, and grows with the growing variety of human life. It ranges from the most rapt speculation to the most vigorous action, from the gentlest sentiment to the most iron public duty, from the lowliest flower in the poetry of Wordsworth to that grand failure, Milton's picture of the fallen Archangel, who lacks the great notes of evil, inasmuch as he is not mean or selfish, but is true to those who have fallen by him, for them braves a worse fate than the worst, and for them amidst despair wears hope upon his brow. The observance of the moral law is the basis and con-

dition, as the common moral nature is the rudiment, of all excellence in human character. But it is the basis and condition only; it is negative, whereas character is positive, and wins our reverence and affection because it is so. The Decalogue gives us no account of heroism or the emotions it excites; still less does it give us an account of that infinite variety of excellences and graces which is the beauty of history and life, and which, we cannot doubt, the great and ever-increasing variety of situations in history and life were intended by the Creator to produce.

If the end and the key of history is the formation of character by effort, the end and key of history are the same with the end and key of the life of man. If the progress of the intellect is the essential part of history, then the harmony between man and history is at an end. Man does not rest in intellect as his end, not even in intellect of a far less dry and more comprehensive kind than that which the maintainers of the intellectual theory of history have in view. If all mankind were Hamlets it would scarcely be a happier world. Suppose intellect to be the end of Man, and all moral effort, all moral beauty, even all poetry, all sentiment, must go for nothing, they are void, meaningless, and vain;—an account of the matter which hardly corresponds with the meaning and fitness (not to assume design) which we see in every part of the physical world. Certainly, if we believe in a Creator, it is difficult to imagine Him making such a world as this, with all its abysses of misery and crime, merely that some of His creatures might with infinite labour attain a modicum of knowledge

which can be of use only in this world, and must come to nothing again when all is done. But if the formation of character by effort is the end, everything has a meaning, everything has a place. A certain degree of material well-being, for which man naturally exerts himself, is necessary to character, which is coarse and low where the life of man is beast-like, miserable and short. Intellect and the activity of intellect enter (we need not here ask how) deeply into character. For the beauty of intellectual excellence the world forgives great weakness, though not vice; and all attempts to cast out intellect and reduce character to emotion, even religious emotion, have produced only a type which is useless to society, and which the healthy moral taste has always rejected. And certainly, if character is the end of history, and moral effort the necessary means to that end, (as no other means of forming character is known to us,) optimism may, after all, not be so stupid as some philosophers suppose; and this world, which is plainly enough so arranged as to force man to the utmost possible amount of effort, may well be the best of all possible worlds.

We must pause before the question how deep the unity of humanity and the unity of history goes; how far those who, through all the ages, have shared in the long effort, with all its failures, errors, sufferings, will share in the ultimate result; how far those who have sown will have their part in the harvest; those who have planted in the fruit; how far the future of our race, as well as the past, is ours. That is a secret that lies behind the veil.



LECTURE II.

ON THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

In a former lecture I gave reasons for hesitating to believe that history is governed by necessary laws. I submitted that history is made up of the actions of men, and that each of us is conscious in his own case that the actions of men are free. I am not aware that even an attempt has been made to reconcile the judgments of the retrospective conscience, the belief implied in those judgments that each action might have been done or left undone, and the exceptional allowance which conscience makes in the case of actions done wholly or partly on compulsion, with the hypothesis that our actions are subject to causation like the events of the physical world. Wherein is an Alfred more the subject of moral approbation than a good harvest, or a Philip II. more the subject of moral disapprobation than the plague? This is a question to which I am not aware that an answer has yet been given.

Still, if it could be shown that history does, as a matter of fact, run in accordance with an invariable law, we might be obliged to admit that the Necessarians (so I

shall venture to call them till they can find another application for the term 'necessity') had gained their cause; though a strange contradiction would then be established between our outward observation and our inward consciousness. I therefore examined the hypothesis of M. Comte, that the development of humanity is regulated by the progress of science through the successive stages of Theological, Metaphysical, and Positive. I submitted that, among other antecedent objections to the theory, these three terms do not form a series, Positive, that is, sound Science and Theology not being successive, but co-existent, in the highest minds. Other writers of the same school can hardly be said to have propounded a general hypothesis. They have rather brought out, and I venture to think immensely exaggerated, the effects produced on the comparative history of nations by certain physical influences, especially by the influence of food. I think I perceive that there is a tendency among the disciples of these teachers to allow that their hypotheses are incapable of verification: but at the same time to insist that they are grand generalizations, and that, being so grand, it is impossible they should not point to some great truth. For my part I see no more grandeur in a scientific hypothesis which is incapable of verification than in the equally broad assertions of astrology. I see no impossibility, but an extreme likelihood, that physical science having lately achieved so much, should arrogate more than she has achieved, and that a mock science should thus have been set up where the domain of real science ends. I think this supposition is in accordance with the tendencies of

human nature and with the history of human thought. It is all the more likely that this usurpation on the part of Science should have taken place, since Theology has tempted Science to usurp by long keeping her out of her rightful domain. We see here, too, the reaction which follows on all injustice.

I submitted, moreover, that it is difficult to see how history can supply its own inductive law, since its course is always advancing, the list of its phenomena is never full, and, till the end of time, the materials for the induction can never be complete. How often would a partial observation lead physicial science to lay down false laws !

But why argue without end about that which we may bring to a practical test? If the master-science has been discovered, let it shew forth its power and we will believe. Let those who have studied the science of Man and History predict a single event by means of their science ; let them even write a single page of history on its method ; let them bring up one child by the rules for directing and modifying moral development which it gives. There is another and a higher test. Has the true key to human character been found ? Then let a nobler type of character be produced. Apply the science of humanity, and produce a better man.

Till the law of history is not only laid down but shewn to agree with the facts, or till humanity has been successfully treated by scientific methods, I confess I shall continue to suspect that the new science of Man is merely a set of terms, such as 'development,' 'social statics,' 'social dynamics,' 'organization,' and, above all, 'law,'

scientifically applied to a subject to which in truth they are only metaphorically applicable; I shall continue to believe that human actions, in history as in individual life and in society, may and do present moral connections of the most intimate and momentous kind, but not that necessary sequence of causation on which alone science can be based; I shall continue to believe that humanity advances by free effort, but that it is not developed according to invariable laws, such as, when discovered, would give birth to a new science.

I confess that I am not wholly unbiassed in adhering to this belief. I am ready to face the conclusions of true science. Let true science make what discoveries it will, for example, as to the origin of life; terrible and mysterious as they may be, they will not be so terrible or mysterious as death; they can but shew us that we spring from something a little higher than dust, when we know already that to dust we must return. But however we may dally with these things in our hours of intellectual ease, there is no man who would not recoil from rendering up his free personality and all it enfolds, to become a mere link in a chain of causation, a mere grain in a mass of being, even though the chain were not more of iron than of gold, even though the mass were all beautiful and good, instead of being full of evil, loathsomeness, and horror. The enthusiasts of science themselves shrink from stating plainly what, upon their theory, Man is, and how his essence differs from that of a brute or of a tree. Is he responsible? Wherein, it must once more be asked, does his responsibility consist? Why praise or blame him? Why reward or punish him? Why glow

with admiration at the good deeds of history, or burn with indignation at the evil? Is the moral world a reality, or is it a mere phantasmagoria, a puppet-show of fate?

Some of these writers cling to the ideas, and love to use the names of Spirit and of God. If spirit exists, what is the spirit of man? Did it spring together with the other part of him by physical development from a monad, or from a lower animal type? We have deeply rooted in our nature a conviction of the indefeasible, undying nature of moral good and evil; the real proof that our moral part lives beyond the grave. Is this conviction a freak of our moral nature? This God who is to reign over His own world on condition that he does not govern it, what is He? The Supreme law of nature? Then let us call Him by his right name. Supposing Him distinct from the law of nature, is He above it or beneath it? If He is above it, why is He bound to observe it in His dealings with the spirit of man? Why may there not be a whole sphere of existence, embracing the relations and the communion between God and man, with which natural science has no concern, and in which her dictation is as impertinent as the dictation of theology in physics? Why may not spiritual experience and an approach to the divine in character be necessary means of insight into the things of the spiritual world, as scientific instruments and scientific skill are necessary means of insight into the things of the material world?

If you give us an hypothesis of the world, let it cover the facts. The religious theory of the world covers all the facts; the physical view of the world covers the physical facts alone.

And after all, what is this adamantine barrier of law built up with so much exultation between man and the source from which hitherto all the goodness and beauty of human life has sprung? In the first place, what right has inductive science to the term *law*? Inductive science can discover at most only general facts; that the facts are more than general, that they are universal, in a word, that they are laws, is an assumption for which inductive science, while she instinctively builds on it, can herself supply no basis. I need not tell my hearers how she has attempted it by the hand of a great logician, or how utterly the attempt has failed. Let her weave mazes of thought, observe upon observation, induce upon induction as she will, she will find the ground of universals and the basis of science to be instinctive reliance in the wisdom and unity of the Creator. And thus science, instead of excluding the supernatural, does constant homage to it for her own existence.

In the second place, what is the sum of physical science? Compared with the comprehensible universe and with conceivable time, not to speak of infinity and eternity, it is the observation of a mere point, the experience of an instant. Are we warranted in founding anything upon such data, except that which we are obliged to found on them, the daily rules and processes necessary for the natural life of man? We call the discoveries of science sublime; and truly. But the sublimity belongs not to that which they reveal, but to that which they suggest. And that which they suggest is, that through this material glory and beauty, of which we see a little and imagine more, there speaks to us a Being whose nature

is akin to ours, and who has made our hearts capable of such converse. Astronomy has its practical uses, without which man's intellect would scarcely rouse itself to those speculations ; but its greatest result is a revelation of immensity pervaded by one informing mind; and this revelation is made by astronomy only in the same sense in which the telescope reveals the stars to the eye of the astronomer. Science finds no law for the thoughts which, with her aid, are ministered to man by the starry skies. Science can explain the hues of sunset, but she cannot tell from what urns of pain and pleasure its pensiveness is poured. These things are felt by all men, felt the more in proportion as the mind is higher. They are a part of human nature ; and why should they not be as sound a basis for philosophy as any other part ? But if they are, the solid wall of material law melts away, and through the whole order of the material world pours the influence, the personal influence, of a spirit corresponding to our own.

Again, is it true that the fixed or the unvarying is the last revelation of science ? These risings in the scale of created beings, this gradual evolution of planetary systems from their centre, do they bespeak mere creative force ? Do they not rather bespeak something which, for want of an adequate word, we must call creative effort, corresponding to the effort by which man raises himself and his estate ? And where effort can be discovered, does not spirit reign again ?

A creature whose sphere of vision is a speck, whose experience is a second, sees the pencil of Raphael moving over the canvas of the Transfiguration. It sees the pen-

cil moving over its own speck, during its own second of existence, in one particular direction ; and it concludes that the formula expressing that direction is the secret of the whole.

There is truth as well as vigour in the lines of Pope on the discoveries of Newton :

> "Superior beings, when of late they saw
> A mortal man unfold all Nature's law,
> Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,
> And shewed a Newton as we shew an ape."

If they could not shew a Newton as we shew an ape, or a Newton's discoveries as we show the feats of apish cunning, it was because Newton was not a mere intellectual power, but a moral being, labouring in the service of his kind, and because his discoveries were the reward not of sagacity only, but of virtue. We can imagine a mere organ of vision so constructed by Omnipotence as to see at a glance infinitely more than could be discovered by all the Newtons ; but the animal which possessed that organ would not be higher than the moral being.

Reason, no doubt, is our appointed guide to truth. The limits set to it by each dogmatist, at the point where it comes into conflict with his dogma, are human limits ; its providential limits we can learn only by dutifully exerting it to the utmost. Yet reason must be impartial in the acceptance of data, and in the demand of proof. Facts are not the less facts because they are not facts of sense ; materialism is not necessarily enlightenment; it is possible to be at once chimerical and gross.

We may venture, without any ingratitude to Science as the source of material benefits and the training-school of inductive reason, to doubt whether the great secret of the moral world is likely to be discovered in her laboratory, or to be revealed to those minds which have been imbued only with her thoughts, and trained in her processes alone. Some indeed, among the men of science who have given us sweeping theories of the world, seem to be not only one-sided in their view of the facts, leaving out of sight the phenomena of our moral nature, but to want one of the two faculties necessary for sound investigation. They are acute observers, but bad reasoners. And science must not expect to be exempt from the rules of reasoning. We cannot give credit for evidence which does not exist, because if it existed it would be of a scientific kind; nor can we pass at a bound from slight and precarious premises to a tremendous conclusion, because the conclusion would annihilate the spiritual nature and annul the Divine origin of man.

That the actions of men are, like the events of the physical world, governed by invariable law, and that consequently there is an exact science of man and history, is a theory of which, even in the attenuated form it is now beginning to assume, we have still to seek the proof. But a science of history is one thing; a philosophy of history is another. A science of history can rest on nothing short of causation; a philosophy of history rests upon connexion; such connexion as we know, and in every process and word of life assume, that there is between the action and its motive, between motives and circumstances, between the conduct of men and the effect

produced upon their character, between historic antecedents and their results. So far is the philosophy of history from being a new discovery, that the most meagre chronicle of the Middle Ages, the painted records of Egyptian kings, as they show some connexion between events, present the germ of a philosophy; of the philosophy which, in its highest form, traces the most general connexions, and traces them through the whole history of man.

The philosophy of history, in its highest sense, as was before said, is the offspring of a great fact which has but recently dawned upon mankind. That fact is the moral unity of the human race. The softening down of mere dogmatic and ecclesiastical divisions between different parts of Christendom, the intercourse, the moral relation, the treaties and bonds ratified by common appeals to God, into which Christendom has entered with nations beyond its pale, have let in the conviction that virtue and truth, however they may vary in their measure, are in their essence the same everywhere, and everywhere divine. It may be that the growth of this conviction is a more potent cause of the change which we see passing over the face of the world than even the final decay, now visibly going on, of feudal institutions, and of the social system with which they are connected. Its consequences, to those who have imagined that the vital faith of man rests on ecclesiastical divisions, are not unattended with perplexity and dismay. But if the Churches of Hildebrand, Luther and Calvin are passing away, above them rises that Church of pure religion and virtue to which in their controversies with each other they have all impli-

citly appealed, and which therefore is above them all. A certain man was hung by his enemies blindfold over what he supposed to be a precipice, with a rope in his hands; he clung till his sinews cracked, and he had tasted the bitterness of death; then, letting go the rope, he found that he had been hanging but half-a-foot from the ground.

Moral discoveries are generally followed by exaggeration. The unity of the human race has been exaggerated into identity; and a strange vision has arisen of an aggregate humanity, of which each man is a manifestation and an organ, and into which we at death return; the difference between death and life being, that the one is an objective the other a subjective existence. This wild realism is broached, singularly enough, by a school of thinkers who pour contempt on metaphysical entities. It is, in fact, part of a desperate attempt to satisfy the religious instincts of man and his sense of immortality, when an irrational philosophy, discarding all sources of truth but the observation of the outward sense, has cut off the belief in the invisible world and God. Among the evidences of religion the fact that the blankest scientific atheism has been compelled to invent for itself a kind of divinity and a kind of spiritual world, and to borrow the worship of the Roman Catholic Church, will not hold the lowest place.

No one can doubt, if he would, that through the life of each of us there is carried a distinct line of moral identity, along which the retrospective conscience runs. No one can persuade himself that this line breaks off at death, so that when a man dies it ceases to signify what his parti-

cular life has been. No one can divest himself of the sense of individual responsibility, or imagine himself, by any effort of fancy, becoming a part of the mass of humanity and ceasing to be himself.

It is not the less certain that we are in a real and deep sense "members one of another;" and that moral philosophy may gain new truth and additional power by taking the philosophy of history into its counsels, and contemplating not only individual humanity but the whole estate of man.

The progress of the human race is a truth of which everyday language is full; one which needs no logical proof and no rhetorical enforcement. That the products of human action, thought, contrivance, labour, do not all perish with their authors, but accumulate from generation to generation, is in itself enough to make each generation an advance upon that which went before it. The movement of history is complex. We asked in a former lecture what was its leading part, and found reason to think that it was the gradual elevation of the human character, to which all the other parts of the movement, intellectual and material, conduce. The rival claims of intellect to be the leading object in the history of humanity, though strongly put forward, will scarcely bear examination. Intellect may be used for good and it may be used for evil; it may be the blessing of humanity or the scourge; it may advance the progress of mankind, as it did when wielded by Luther, or retard it, as it did when wielded by Bonaparte. Whether it shall be used for good or evil, whether it shall be the blessing of humanity or the scourge, whether it shall advance progress or retard

it, depends on the moral character of the possessor, which determines its employment. And this being the case, intellect must be subordinate to moral character in history.

Character, indeed, seems to be the only thing within the range of our comprehension for the sake of which we can conceive God having been moved to create man. We needlessly put a stumbling-block in our own way by importing into the divine nature the stoic notion of self-sufficing happiness. The highest nature which we can conceive is not one which disdains, but one which needs affection: and worthy affection can only spring from or be excited by a character of a certain kind. The supposition that man was created to love his Creator and to be the object of his Creator's love accords with our conceptions both of God and man. It does not accord with our conception of God to suppose that He created man with such capacity for suffering as well as for happiness, and placed him in such a world as this, merely to make an exhibition of His own power or to glorify Himself. To make an exhibition of power belongs to the restlessness of mortal strength, not to the completeness and calmness of Omnipotence. To seek glory belongs to weak human ambition: and equivocal indeed would be the glory of creation if the history of man were to be its measure. One historian after another sets himself to write the panegyric of his favourite period, and each panegyric is an apology or a falsehood.

Our hearts acquiesce, too, in the dispensation which, instead of creating character in its perfection, leaves it to be perfected by effort. We can conceive no character

in a created being worthy of affection which is not produced by a moral struggle; and on the other hand, the greater the moral difficulties that have been overcome, the more worthy of affection does the character seem. Try to conceive a being created morally perfect without effort; you will produce a picture of insipidity which no heart can love.

And effort is the law, if law it is to be called, of history. History is a series of struggles to elevate the character of humanity in all its aspects, religious, intellectual, social, political, rising sometimes to an agony of aspiration and exertion, and frequently followed by lassitude and relapse, as great moral efforts are in the case of individual men. Those who espouse the theory of necessary development as the key to history are driven to strange consequences. They are compelled to represent the torpid sensualism of the Roman Empire as an advance upon the vigorous though narrow virtue of the Republic. I see not how they escape from allowing, what with their historical sympathies they would not be disposed to allow, that in the history of our own country the Restoration is an advance upon the Puritan Republic. The facts of history correspond better with our moral sense if we take the view that the awakening of moral life in the race, as in the man, often manifests itself in endeavours which are overstrained, chimerical, misdirected, higher than the general nature can sustain, and that upon these endeavours a reaction is apt to ensue. During the reaction some of the intellectual fruits of the crisis may be gathered in, but the moral nature languishes; though the elevation of the moral type gained by the previous effort

does not perish, but is gained forever, and, so far as it is true, enters forever as an exalting influence into the thoughts and lives of men.

But here another problem presents itself, which may be beyond our power fully to solve, but as to which we cannot forbear to ask, and may possibly obtain, some satisfaction. In the material and intellectual world we are content to see order and design. The law of gravitation, the laws of the association of ideas, so far as they go, perfectly satisfy our minds. But in history it is otherwise. Here we are not satisfied with the discovery of a law, whether of development or of effort; we desire, we cannot help desiring, to see not only order and design, but justice.

We look over history. We see the man almost pitilessly sacrificed to the race. Scarcely any great step in human progress is made without multitudes of victims. Each pulling down of worn-out institutions brings perplexity and suffering on that generation, however pregnant with good it may be to the next. Every great change of opinion is accompanied, to one generation, by the distress of doubt. Every revolution in trade or industry, however beneficent in its results, involves sufferings to the masses which the world is long in learning how to avert. In the rude commencements of government and law what evils do men endure from tyranny and anarchy! How many of the weaker members of the race perish of want and cold before feeble invention can bridge the gulf between savage and civilized life?

It is difficult to doubt that in the early ages of the world races are brought forward to take the lead in history by

the cruel test of pre-eminence in war and success in conquering the neighbouring races. To primitive tribes, and even to nations long civilized but not yet penetrated with the sense of our common humanity, conquest seems no crime, but either a natural appetite or an heroic enterprise; and in the earliest ages the circumstances of savage hordes are such that they are inevitably driven on each other, or on the neighbouring nations, in quest of fresh hunting-fields, new pastures, or richer and sunnier lands. The human race reaps from this process a moral as well as a physical benefit. There is a connexion, not clearly traced, yet certain, between the stronger qualities in human character, such as courage, and the tenderer qualities, such as mercy, while conversely there is a certain connexion between cowardice and cruelty; and the moral, as well as the physical, basis of humanity, requires to be laid in fortitude and strength.

In philosophy and science again, the race, like the man, advances by the trial of successive hypotheses, which are adopted and rejected in turn till the true one is at length found. In these successive trials and rejections, with the mental efforts and sacrifices they involve, humanity gains, what no sudden illumination could give it, large spiritual experience and a deep sense of the value of truth. But error is the portion of those generations by whom the false hypotheses are tried. Nor is this process confined to the domain of mere intellectual truth; theories of life and modes of self-culture are in like manner tried and found impracticable or incomplete, at the expense of thousands, among whom are often numbered the flower of mankind. What effusion of blood, what rending of

affections, what misery has been undergone to try out the question between different theories of society and government, each of which was plausible in itself! What an expenditure of high and aspiring spirits was necessary to prove that the monastic and contemplative life, in spite of its strong natural attractions, was not practicable for man!

Cast your eyes over the world, and see how the masses of men, how the majority of nations, labour not only in mental but moral degradation to support a high and fine type of humanity in the few. Examine any beautiful work of art, and consider how coarse and dark is the life of those who have dug its materials, or the materials for the tools which wrought it, out of the quarry or the mine. Things absolutely essential to intellectual progress are furnished by classes which for ages to come the great results of intellect cannot reach, and the lamp which lights the studies of a Bacon or a Leibnitz is fed by the wild, rude fisherman of the Northern Sea.

It is true that wherever service is rendered we may trace some reciprocal advantage, either immediate or not long deferred. The most abstract discoveries of science gradually assume a practical form, and descend in the shape of material conveniences and comforts to the masses whose labour supported the discoverer in intellectual leisure. Nor are the less fortunate ages of history and the lower states of society without their consolations. The intervals between great moral and intellectual efforts have functions of their own. Imperial Rome, amidst her moral lassitude, makes great roads, promotes material civilization, codifies the law. The last century had no

soul for poetry, but it took up with melody, and produced the Handels and Mozarts. Lower pains go with lower pleasures, and the savage life is not without its physical immunities and enjoyments. The life of intense hope that is lived in the morning of great revolutions, may partly make up for the danger, the distress, and the disappointment of their later hour. But these, if they are touches of kindness and providence in Nature, welcome as proof that she is not a blind or cruel power, fall far short of the full measure of justice.

There are nations which have lived and perished half civilized, and in a low moral state, as we may be sure was the case with Egypt, and have played but a humble part, though they have played a part, in the history of the world. There are races which have become extinct, or have been reduced to a mere remnant, and whose only work it has been to act as pioneers for more gifted races, or even to serve as the whetstone for their valour and enterprise in the conflict of primitive tribes. There are other races, such as the negro races of Africa, which have remained to the present time, without progress or apparent capability of progress, waiting to be taken up into the general movement by their brethren who are more advanced, when, in the course of Providence, the age of military enterprise is past, and that of religious and philanthropic enterprise is come. They wait, perhaps, not in vain; but, in the interim, do not myriads live and die in a state little above that of brutes?

The question then is, Can we find any hypothesis in accordance with the facts of history which will reconcile the general course of history to our sense of justice? I

say, to our sense of justice. I assume here that man has really been created in the image of God; that the morality of man points true, however remotely, to the morality of God; that human justice is identical with divine justice, and is therefore a real key to the history of the world. "If," says Clarke, "justice and goodness be not the same in God as in our ideas, then we mean nothing when we say that God is necessarily just and good; and for the same reason it may as well be said that we know not what we mean, when we affirm that He is an intelligent and wise Being; and there will be no foundation at all left on which we can fix anything. Thus the *moral attributes* of God, however they be acknowledged in words, yet in reality they are by these men entirely taken away; and, upon the same grounds, the *natural attributes* may also be denied. And so, upon the whole, this opinion likewise, if we argue upon it consistently, must finally recur to absolute atheism." Either to absolute atheism or to the belief in a God who is mere power, and to religion which is mere submission to power, without moral sympathy or allegiance.

I will not turn aside here to combat the opposite theory. I will merely observe by the way that these things have their history. If the doctrines of any established Church are not absolute and final truth, its corporate interests are apt ultimately to come into collision with the moral instincts of man pressing onwards, in obedience to his conscience, towards the further knowledge of religious truth. Then arises a terrible conflict. To save their threatened dominion, the defenders of ecclesiastical interests use, while they can, the civil

sword, and wage with that weapon contests which fill the world with worse than blood. They massacre, they burn, they torture, they drag human nature into depths of deliberate cruelty which, without their teaching, it could never have known; they train men, and not only men but women, to look on with pious joy while frames broken with the rack are borne from the dungeon of the Inquisition to its pile. Uniting intrigue with force, they creep to the ear of kings, of courtiers, of royal concubines; they consent, as the price of protection, to bless and sanctify despotism in its foulest form; they excite bloody wars of opinion against nations struggling to be free. Still, the day goes against them; humanity asserts its power; executioners fail; sovereigns discover that it little avails the king to rule the people if the Magian is to rule the king; public opinion sways the world, and the hour of Philip II., of Père la Chaise, of Madame de Maintenon, is gone never to return. Then follows a hopeless struggle for the last relics of religious protection, for exclusive political privileges, and for tests; a struggle in which religion is made to appear in the eyes of the people the constant enemy of improvement and of justice, —religion, from which all true improvement and all true justice spring. This struggle, too, approaches its inevitable close. Then recourse is had, in the last resort, to intellectual intrigue, and the power of sophistry is invoked to place man in the dilemma between submission to an authority which has lost his allegiance and the utter abandonment of his belief in God—a desperate policy; for, placed between falsehood and the abyss, humanity has always had grace to choose the abyss, conscious as

it is that to fly from falsehood, through whatever clouds and darkens, is to fly to the God of truth. In weighing the arguments put before us on these questions, let us not leave out of sight influences whose fatal power history has recorded in her bloodiest page.

Assuming, then, that human justice is the same quality as divine justice, the idea of moral waste in the divine government, as displayed in history, is one in which we shall never force our hearts to acquiesce. If moral beings are wasted by the Creator, what is saved? Butler, indeed, suggests the analogy of physical nature, and intimates that we may resign ourselves to the waste of souls as we do to the waste of seeds. But in the case of the seed nothing is wasted but the form; the matter remains indestructible; while misery and despair there is none. The analogy of animals, on which Butler elsewhere touches in a different connexion, seems more formidable. Here are beings sentient, to a certain extent intelligent, and capable of pleasure and pain like ourselves, among whom good and evil seem to be distributed by a blind fate, regardless of any merits or demerits of theirs. The only answer that can at present be given to the question thus raised seems to be this: that we are not more certain of our own existence than we are that no fate or law regardless of morality rules us; and that as to animals, their destiny is simply beyond our knowledge. Was man to be placed in the world alone? Was he to be left without the sentiments and the moral influences which spring from his relations with his mute companions and helpmates? Or could he, the heir of pain in this world, be placed amidst a painless creation, without

destroying the sympathy of things? It may be observed, too, that in the state of a large portion of the animal creation there seems to be a progressive improvement, not taking the form of physical development, but depending on and bearing a faint analogy to the improvement of the human race. As the human race spreads over the world and cultivates it, the carnivorous and ferocious animals disappear, and those more peaceful and happier tribes remain which are domesticated by man. If man himself should become, as some seem to expect, less carnivorous as he grows more civilized, his relations with animals will of course become still more kindly, and their lot still better. This remark does not go far; it applies only to a portion of the animal creation. But so far as it goes, it tends to prove that animals are not under blind physical law, but under providential care; and it suggests a sort of development, if that word is to be used, very different from the organic development which a certain school of science is seeking everywhere to establish. Rational enquiries into the nature, character, and lot of animals seem to be but just beginning to be made; and in their course they may clear up part of that which is now dark. Meantime, mere defect of knowledge is no stumbling-block. There is a faith against reason which consists in believing, or hypocritically pretending to believe, vital facts upon bad evidence, when our conscience bids us rest satisfied only with the best; but there is also a rational faith which consists in trusting, where our knowledge fails, to the goodness and wisdom, which, so far as our knowledge extends, are found worthy of our trust.

Butler, while he built his whole system on analogy, declined to enquire strictly what the logical force of analogy was. The real ground of his great argument seems to be this—that the dealings of the same Being (in this instance the Creator) may be expected always to be the same, which is true, with this momentous qualification, that the thing dealt with must be the same also. There is not only no assurance, there is not even the faintest presumption that as God deals with seeds so He will deal with lives; or that, as He deals with mortal lives, so will He deal with immortal souls. The only analogy really applicable to these matters seems to be that of the moral nature of man, on which its Maker has impressed His own image, and which, when at its best, and therefore likest Him, shrinks from the thought of moral waste, and if it is compelled to inflict suffering by way of punishment, does so not to destroy but to save. The passage of Origen, of which Butler's analogy is an expansion, is taken from the literature of an age not too deep-thinking or too deep-feeling to endure the idea of an arbitrary God. To us that idea is utterly unendurable. If we could believe God to be arbitrary, above the throne of God in our hearts would be the throne of justice. If we translate Origen's words into philosophic language, do not they, and does not the argument which Butler has based on them, come to this,—that God is bound to deal with the spiritual as He deals with the material world? And if this is true, is He not a Fate rather than a God?

We cannot help divining, then, that the true hypothesis of history will be one which will correspond to our

sense of justice. But where can such an hypothesis be found? Is there any colour of reason for adopting a view of history which would suppose a deeper community of the human race as to its object and its destiny, than common language implies, and which would stake less than is commonly assumed to be staked on the individual life?

To such a view seem to point all the instincts which lead man to sacrifice his individual life to his fellows, his country, and, when his vision becomes more enlarged, to his kind. These instincts are regardless of the state of moral perfection at which he whom they propel to destruction has personally arrived. They do not calculate whether the soldier who rushes first into the breach, the man who plunges into a river to save one who is drowning, the physician who loses his own life in exploring an infectious disease, is, to use the common phrase, fit to die. They seem distinctly to aim at a moral object beyond the individual moral life, and affecting the character of the race. Yet at the same time they give strong assurance to him whose life they take that it is good for him to die.

That desire of living after death in the grateful memory of our kind, or, as we fondly call it, of immortality, to which the enjoyment of so many lives is sacrificed, is it a mere trick of nature to lure man to labour against his own interest for her general objects? Or does it denote a real connexion of the generation to which the hero, the writer, the founder belongs, with the generations that will succeed?

Again, what is it that persuades the lowest and most suf-

fering classes of society, when the superiority of physical force is on their side, to rest quiet beneath their lot, and forbear from breaking in with the strong hand upon civilization, which in its tardy progress will scarcely bring better times to their children's children, and has too plainly no better times in store for them? Is it not an instinct which bids them respect the destinies of the race? And why should they be bidden to respect the destinies of the race, if those destinies are not theirs?

Why this close interlacing of one moral being with the rest in society, if after all each is to stand or fall entirely alone? Why this succession of ages, and this long intricate drama of history, if all that is to be done could have been done as well by a single set of actors in a single scene?

If each man stood entirely alone in his moral life, unsupported and unredeemed by his kind, nature, the minister of eternal justice, would surely be less lavish of individual life, and of all that is bound up in it, than she is. At least, she would shew some disposition to discriminate. Those myriads on whom, through the accidents of war, changes and failures of trade, earthquakes, plagues and famines, the tower of Siloam falls, as we know they are not sinners above all the Galileans, so we can scarcely think that they, above all the Galileans, are prepared to die.

Society is the necessary medium of moral development to man. Yet even society, to serve its various needs, sacrifices to a great extent the moral development of individual men. It is vain to say that those who are put, through life, to the coarsest uses, the hewers of wood and drawers

of water to the social system, can rise to the highest and most refined moral ideal ; though we know that in merit towards society they are, and are sure that in the eye of God they must be, equal to those who do. Delicacy of sentiment, which is essential to our notion of the moral ideal, can scarcely exist without fineness of intellect, or fineness of intellect without high mental cultivation. And if we were to say that the want of that which high mental culture confers is no loss, we should stultify all our own efforts to promote and elevate education. Even the most liberal callings carry with them an inherent bias scarcely compatible with the equable and flawless perfection which constitutes the ideal. Busy action and solitary thought are both necessary for the common service ; yet inevitable moral evils and imperfections beset alike those who act in the crowd and those who think alone. Each profession has its point of honour, requisite for social purposes, but overstrained with regard to general morality, and naturally apt to be accompanied by some relaxation of the man's general moral tone. We forgive much to a soldier for valour in the field, much to a judge for perfect integrity on the bench of justice ; and we can hardly suppose that the conscience of the soldier or the judge will not admit into its decisions something of the same indulgence. Did not the strictest of Universities choose as her Chancellor a man of the world, a man of pleasure, and a duellist, because as a soldier and a citizen he had done his duty supremely well ?

Does it follow that the moral law is to be relaxed on any point, or that any man is to propose to himself a lower standard of morality in any respect ? No ; it only

follows that in forming our general views of man and his destiny we must limit our expectations of individual perfection, and seek for compensation in the advancement of the kind. We must in the main look for the peculiar virtues of the religious pastor elsewhere than in the camp or at the bar; though when the virtues of the religious blend with those of the busy and stirring life, we feel that the highest aspiration of nature is fulfilled. It may be that advancing civilization will soften down inequalities in the moral condition of men, and diminish the impediments to self-improvement which they present; but we can scarcely expect that it will efface them, any more than it will efface the moral differences attendant upon difference of sex.

In the passionate desire to reach individual perfection, and in the conviction that the claims of society were opposed to that desire, men have fled from society and embraced the monastic life. The contemplative and ascetic type of character alone seemed clear of all those peculiar flaws and deformities to which each of the worldly types is liable. The experiment has been tried on a large scale, and under various conditions; by the Buddhist ascetics; in a higher form by the Christian monks of the Eastern Church; and in a higher still by those of the West. In each case the result has been decisive. The monks of the West long kept avenging nature at bay by uniting action of various kinds with asceticism and contemplation, but among them, too, corruption at last set in, and proved that this hypothesis of life and character was not the true one, and that humanity must relinquish the uniform and perfect type

which formed the dream of a Benedict or a Francis, and descend again to variety and imperfection.

Variety and imperfection are things, the first of which seems necessarily to involve the second. Yet the taste which prefers variety to sameness, even in the moral world, is so deeply rooted in our nature, that if taste means anything, this taste would seem to have its source and its justification in the reality of things.

Separate, too, entirely the destinies of man from those of his fellow, and you will encounter some perplexing questions, not to be avoided, touching the strong cases of natural depravity which occur among the most unfortunate of our kind. Actual idiocy may be regarded as destroying humanity altogether. But are there not natural depravities, moral and intellectual, short of idiocy, which preclude the attainment of any high standard of character, and forbid us to make the moral destiny of these beings too dependent on the individual life?

Our common notions, which make the moral life so strictly individual, seem to depend a good deal on the belief that each man is, morally, not only a law but an independent and perfect law to himself. But is this so? Is the voice of individual conscience independent and infallible? Do we not, in doubtful cases, rectify it by consulting a friend, who represents to us the general conscience of mankind? Of what is it that conscience speaks? Is it of abstract right and wrong? Are not these conscience itself under another name? Moralists, therefore, support conscience, and give it meaning by identifying it with universal expediency, with the fitness of things, with the supreme will of the Creator. Univer-

sal expediency and the fitness of things are ultimate and distant references, if they are not altogether beyond the range of our vision. The will of God as an object distinct from morality seems altogether to defy our power of conception. Would conscience retain its authority if it were not more immediately supported by human sympathy, love, and reverence, through which the Maker of us all speaks to each of us, and which are bestowed in virtue of our conformity to a type of moral character preserved by the opinion and affection of the race? The sympathy, love, and reverence of our kind are, at all events, objects of a real desire and incitements to virtuous action, which the philosophic definitions of morality, however high-sounding, can scarcely be said to be.

Common language divides virtues and vices into the social and the self-regarding. But are there any purely self-regarding virtues or vices? Does not temperance fit us and intemperance unfit us to perform the duties of life towards our kind? Is it easy to preach temperance and denounce intemperance very powerfully except by reference to the claims and opinion of society? Would a man be very clearly bound to give up an enjoyment which injures himself alone? It is sometimes said of a good-natured spendthrift and voluptuary that he was only his own enemy. We have not to look far to see that he must have been the enemy of all about him, and of society. But if the statement were true it would almost disarm the censure of mankind.

The question whether virtue be enlightened and deep self-love, which has been rather glossed than solved, may perhaps be partly solved by experiment. You preach

against incontinence, for instance, on grounds of personal purity, and your preaching proves not very effective. Try a different course. Preach against incontinence on the ground of pity for its victims, and see whether that motive will be more availing.

That there is a complete and independent moral code innate in each of us, is an opinion which it is difficult to hold when we see how much the special precepts of the moral law have been altered by social opinion for the best members of society in the course of history. Piracy, wars of conquest, duelling, for example, were once approved by the moral code; they are now condemned by the improved code which has sprung from the enlarged moral views and more enlightened conscience of mankind. I say that the special precepts of the moral code are altered; I do not say that the essence of morality changes. The essence of morality does not change. Its immutability is the bond between the hearts of Homer's time and ours. The past is not without its image in the present. Suppose a young London thief, such as Defoe has painted, kind-hearted, true to his comrades in danger and distress, making a free and generous use of his plunder, and in his depredations having mercy on the poor. It is plain that the boy would be much better if he did not steal, as he will himself see, directly he is taught what is right. It is plain, on the other hand, that he is not a bad boy, that (to apply the most practical test) you can neither hate nor despise him; that on the whole he does more good than evil in the world. The evil he does even to property is slight, compared with that which is done by rich idlers and voluptuaries, since while he steals

a little they taint it all. Not that the moral law does not include property as an essential precept, but that the essence of morality lies deeper than the special precepts of the moral law.

Where the essence of morality lies, history must wait to be taught by ethical science. Till she is taught it is impossible that she can form her philosophy on a sound basis ; and, therefore, those who are devoted to historical studies may be excused for impatiently desiring a more rational enquiry into this, the central secret of the world. It is not by verbal definitions, however philosophic in appearance, that we shall ascertain what morality really is. We must proceed by a humbler method. Does morality lie in action, or in character ? Do not actions similar in themselves and equally voluntary, change their moral hue as they spring from one character or another ? Are not crimes committed from habit, at once the least voluntary and the most culpable ? and is not the paramount importance of character, of which habitual action is the test, the account of this paradox ? Is not the same action, if done by a character tending upwards, regarded as comparatively good ? if by a character tending downwards, as comparatively evil ? Is it not, in short, as indications of character, and on that account only, that actions excite our moral emotions, as distinct from our mere sense of social interest ? And if this be so, is it not rather in character than in action that morality lies ? If it is, we must analyze the phenomena of character by some rational method. There are two sets of qualities, one of which excites our reverence, the other our love ; and which tend to fusion in the more perfect characters,

but, as a character never reaches perfection, are never completely fused. What is the common ingredient of these two sets of qualities? What is the common element in the hero and the saint? What connects grandeur of character with grace? What, in short, are our several moral tastes, and what and how related are the different points of character that attract and repel them? In the case of doubtful characters, such as that of a Wallenstein, or that of an Othello, what is it that constitutes the doubt? what is it that turns the scale? Which of the vices are more, which less, destructive of beauty of character? and what is it that determines the difference of their effects? If deliberate cruelty, for instance, is the worst, the most unpardonable of vices, may it not point to the prime source of moral excellence in the opposite pole? These are questions which seem at least to present rational starting-points for enquiry, and to be capable of being handled by a rational method; and they must be rationally handled before we can construct a real philosophy of history—perhaps, it may be added, before moral philosophy itself can become fruitful, and pass from airy definition to the giving of real precepts for the treatment of our moral infirmities and the attainment of moral health. The school which regards history as the evolution of a physical organization under a physical law, is ready with a multiplicity of hypotheses, furnished by the analogy of physical science. The school which regards history as the manifestation and improvement of human character through free action is in suspense for want of some sounder and more comprehensive account of human character than has yet been supplied.

On the other hand, history, as we have said, may lend light to the moral philosopher. He cannot fail to be assisted and guided by contemplating not individual humanity only, but the whole estate of man. Some things become palpable on the large scale, which, in examining the single instance, do not come into view or may be overlooked. History forces on our notice, and compels us to take reasonably into account, the weakness, the necessary imperfections, the various and unequal lot, the constraining circumstances, the short, precarious life of man. In history, too, beside the tragic element of human life, there plainly appears another element, which may not be without its significance. Whenever an historian gives us a touch of genuine humour, we recognize in it a touch of truth. Humour, the appreciation of what is comic in man and his actions, is a part of our moral nature ; it is founded on a kind of moral justice ; it discriminates crime from weakness ; it tempers the horror which the offences of a Louis XIV. excite, with a smile, which denotes the allowance due to a man taught by his false position and by his sycophants to play the god. In its application to the whole lot of man, and to the lot of each man, it may perhaps be thought to suggest that the drama is not pure tragedy, and that all is not quite so terrible or so serious as it seems.

There is no doubt that all this points, not by any means to a lower morality, but to a somewhat lower estimate of the moral powers of individual man ; to an attainable ideal, and to the deliberate love of human characters in spite of great imperfections, if on the whole they have tended upwards, and done, in their measure,

their duty to their kind. And is not man more likely to struggle for that which is within than for that which is beyond his reach? If you would have us mount the steep ascent, is it not better to shew us the first step of the stairs than that which is nearest to the skies? If all the rhetoric of the pulpit were to be taken as literally true, would not society be plunged into recklessness, or dissolved in agonies of despair? A human morality saves much which an impracticable morality would throw away; it readily accepts the tribute of moral poverty, the fragment of a life, the plain prosaic duty of minds incapable from their nature or circumstances of conceiving a high poetic ideal. On the other hand, it has its stricter side. It knows nothing of the merits of mere innocence. It requires active service to be rendered to society. It holds out no salvation by wearing of amulets or telling of beads. Regarding man as essentially a social being, it bears hard on indolent wealth, however regular and pious; on sinecurism in every sense; on all who are content to live by the sweat of another man's brow. It teaches that to be underpaid is better than to be overpaid; and that covetousness and grasping, though they may not violate the law, are a robbery, at once immoral and fatuous, of the common store.

There is little fear, let us say once more, lest any man, not a victim to the mad mysticism into which materialism is apt to be hurried by the Nemesis of reason, should imagine himself divested of his distinct personality, or of his distinct personal responsibility, and merged in the aggregate of humanity, or in the universe of which humanity is a part. It is difficult to express such

reveries in the language of sane men. But that the human race is, in a real sense, one; that its efforts are common, and tend in some measure to a joint result; that its several members may stand in the eye of their Maker, not only as individual agents, but as contributors to this joint result,—is a doctrine which our reason, perhaps, finds something to support, and which our hearts readily accept. It unites us not only in sympathy but in real interest with the generations that are to come after us, as well as with those that have gone before us; it makes each generation, each man, a partaker in the wealth of all; it encourages us to sow a harvest which we shall reap, not with our own hands, indeed, but by the hands of those that come after us; it at once represses selfish ambition and stimulates the desire of earning the gratitude of our kind; it strengthens all social, and regulates all personal desires; it limits, and by limiting sustains effort, and calms the passionate craving to grasp political perfection or final truth; it fills up the fragment, gives fruitfulness to effort, apparently wasted, and covers present failure with ultimate success; it turns the deaths of states, as of men, into incidents in one vast life; and quenches the melancholy which flows from the ruins of the past,—that past into which we too are sinking, just when great things seem about to come.





LECTURE III.

ON SOME SUPPOSED CONSEQUENCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF HISTORICAL PROGRESS.

In previous lectures on the "Study of History" I fully accepted the doctrine of Historical Progress. It is obvious that the knowledge and wealth of our race increase and accumulate from age to age, and that their increase and accumulation re-act powerfully on the moral state of man. It is less obvious, but it seems not less certain, that our views of morality itself expand, and that our moral code is improved, as, by the extension of human intercourse, our moral relations are multiplied, and as, by the advancement of science and jurisprudence, they become better understood. Nor can it easily be denied that this progress extends even to religion. In learning more of man we learn more of Him in whose image man was made; in learning more of the creation we learn more of the Creator; and everything which in the course of civilization tends to elevate, deepen, and refine the character generally, tends to elevate, deepen, and refine it in its religious aspect.

But then it is alleged, and even triumphantly pro-

claimed, that tremendous consequences follow from this doctrine. If we accept historical progress, it is said, we must give up Christianity. Christianity, we are told, like other phases of the great onward movement of humanity, has had its place, and that a great place, in history. In its allotted epoch it was progressive in the highest degree, and immense veneration and gratitude are due to it on that account: but, like other phases of the same movement, it had its appointed term. That term it has already exceeded. It has already become stationary, and even retrograde; it has begun, instead of being the beneficent instrument, to be the arch-enemy of human progress. It cumbers the earth; and the object of all honest, scientific, free-thinking men, who are lovers of their kind, should be to quicken the death-pangs into which it has manifestly fallen, and remove once for all this obstruction to the onward movement of the race. Confusion and distress will probably attend the final abandonment of "the popular religion;" but it is better at once to encounter them than to keep up any longer an imposture which is disorganizing and demoralizing to society, as well as degrading to the mind of man 'Let us at once, by a courageous effort, say farewell to our old faith, and, by a still more courageous effort, find ourselves a new one!' A gallant resolution, and one which proves those who have taken it to be practical believers in free-will, and redeems them from the reproach of admitting the logical consequences of their own doctrines touching the necessary progress of humanity by way of development and under the influence of invariable laws. If history grows like a vegetable, or like the body of an animal, no

effort of courage can be needed, or avail, to direct its growth. We have only to let well, or ill, alone.

The notion that Christianity is at this moment manifestly in an expiring state, or, to use the favourite language of the sect, that "the popular religion has entered on its last phase," is perhaps partly produced by the reform, or attempted reform, of Christian doctrine which is at present going on. This movement is supposed to be an exact parallel to the attempt made by the later Platonists to rationalize the popular mythology of Greece, and equally ominous of approaching dissolution to the superstition with which its more philosophic adherents found it necessary thus desperately to deal. The analogy would be more just if the later Platonists, instead of endeavouring to bring a sensual superstition to the level of the age by violently importing into it a spiritual philosophy, had endeavoured to restore it to it its primitive and most sensual simplicity. Though even in that case it would not be certain, without further proof, that because the attempt to reform Polytheism had failed, Christianity must be incapable of reform. Historical analogy, as an interpreter of present events, has its uses, and it has also its limits. Christianity supposes that with its Founder something new came into the world. The King of Siam may, after all, be about, in contradiction to the whole of his experience, to see the water freeze.

If, however, they to whom I allude have rightly read the present by the light of the past; if, as they say, a sound and free philosophy of history distinctly points to the approaching departure of Christianity from the world, a terrible crisis has indeed arrived, and one which might

well be expected to strike their rhetorical exultation dumb. They admit, I believe, that religion, or whatever stands in the place of it, is the very core, centre, and vital support of our social and political organization; so that without a religion the civil tie would be loosened, personal would completely prevail over public motives, selfish ambition and cupidity would break loose in all directions, and society and the body politic would be in danger of dissolution. They cry aloud, as I have said, that Christianity being exploded, a new religion must be produced in order to save humanity from ruin and despair. Now to produce a new religion off-hand, and that at a moment of the most appalling peril, and consequently of the greatest mental agony and distraction, is an achievement which even the most extreme believers in free-will and self-exertion would scarcely think possible to man. I am not aware that so much as the rudiment of a new religion has yet been actually produced, unless it be the Humanitarian religion of M. Comte, which is merely a mad travestie of the Roman Catholic Church, and from which even the disciples of the Comtist philosophy, if they have any sense of the grotesque remaining, turn away in despair. Thus the law of human development, instead of being, like the laws discovered by science, regular and beneficent, the just object of our confidence as well as of our admiration, has failed abruptly, and brought humanity to the brink of an abyss.

It is my strong conviction that history has arrived at no such crisis; that the indications of historical philosophy have been misunderstood, and that they do not

point to the impending fall, but rather to the approaching regeneration of Christendom. I do not think that we should refuse to consider, in this lecture-room, a question which lies at the very root of the philosophy of history, merely because it happens also to be of the highest practical importance. I propose, therefore, to add a few remarks on this point, by way of supplement to the two general lectures on the "Study of History," in which the Doctrine of Historical Progress has been maintained.

In the first place, we are struck by the fact that sustained historical progress has not been universal, as those against whom I am arguing always assume, but has been confined to Christian nations. For a short time the Mahomedan nations seemed to advance, not merely in conquering energy, but in civilization. They have even been set up as the moral rivals of Christendom by those who are anxious that Christendom should not appear to be without a rival. But their progress was greatest where they were most immediately in contact with Christianity, and it has long since ended in utter corruption and irrevocable decay. Where is the brilliant monarchy of Haroun Alraschid? How ephemeral was it compared even with that old Byzantine Empire into whose frame Christianity had infused a new life under the very ribs of death; a life which even the fatal bequest of Roman despotism, extending itself to the Church as well as to the State, could scarcely quench, and which, through ages of Mahomedan oppression, has smouldered on beneath the ashes to burst out again in reviving Greece. Even in the Moorish communities of Spain, the flower as they were of Mahomedan civilization, internal cor-

ruption had prepared the way for the conquering arms of Ferdinand and Isabella. Mahomedanism, however, whatever the degree of progressive energy displayed by it may have been, was not a separate and independent religion, but a debased offspring of Judaism and Christianity. From the intercourse of its founder with Jews and Christians it derived the imposing Monotheism which has been its strength both as a conquering power and as a system of civilization; while the want of a type of character, such as Christianity possesses, has been in every sense its fatal weakness. Turning to the remoter East, we find that its history has not been a history of progress, but of the successive descents of conquering races from the more bracing climate of the North, subjugating the languid inhabitants of the plains, and founding a succession of empires, sometimes mighty and gorgeous, but always barren of nobler fruits, which, when the physical energy of the conquering race was spent, in its turn at once fell into decay. The semblance of progress, in short, has been but a semblance, due merely to fresh infusions of animal vigour, not to any sustaining principle of moral life. China advanced at an early period to a certain point of material civilization; but having reached that point she became a byeword of immobility, as Egypt, the ancient China, was in a former day. This immemorial stagnation seems now about to end in total dissolution, unless Christian nations should infuse a regenerating influence from without. The civilization of Mexico is deplored by certain philosophers, who seem to think that, had its career not been cut short by Spanish conquest, it might have attained a great height, and con-

firmed their views of history. But what reason is there to think that Mexico would ever have advanced beyond great buildings erected by slave labour, human sacrifices, and abominable vices? Again, we are told that the Christian view of history must be narrow and false, because it does not include in its theory of human progress the great negro and fetichist populations of Africa. But we ought to be informed what part the negro and fetichist populations of Africa have really played in the progress of humanity; or how the invariable law of spontaneous development through a certain series of intellectual and social conditions, which we are told governs the history of all nations, has been verified in their case. The progress of ancient Greece and Rome was real and high while it lasted, and Christianity has received its fruit into herself. Its moral sources deserve to be more accurately explored than they have yet been; but in both cases it came to an end at the moment of its apparent culmination, from internal causes and without hope of renewal. In both cases it sank under an empire, the Macedonian in one case, that of the Cæsars in the other, which, whatever it may have been in its effects on humanity at large, was certainly the grave of republican virtue.

It is confidently said that the historical progress of the most advanced nations of Europe during recent times has been beyond the pale of Christendom, and that it forms a conclusive proof of the exhaustion and decline of Christianity. The intellect of Protestant Germany, which has played so momentous a part in the historical progress of the last century, is triumphantly cited as a palpable

instance of this fact. There is much which to the eye of the theologian, looking to religious professions, is without the pale of Christendom ; but which to the historical eye, looking to moral connexions, is still within it. That increase of infidelity, which is spoken of with so much alarm on one side and so much exultation on the other, theologically viewed, is no doubt great, especially if we look not to mere numbers, but to intellectual cultivation and influence; but, viewed morally, it is, considering the distractions of Christendom, surprisingly small. Great masses of intelligence and eminent leaders of thought in all departments have been nominally and outwardly estranged from Christendom by divisions of the Churches ; by the rending of the truth and of the means of religious influence between them ; by the barren and impotent dogmatism into which, through their rivalries and controversies, they are perpetually driving each other ; by the sinister alliances of some of them with political obstructiveness and injustice ; by the apparent conflict which their pretensions create between the claims of reason and those of religious faith ; by the false ground which some of them have taken in regard to the discoveries of science and historical philosophy ; and most of all, perhaps, by the contradiction which their mutual denunciations produce between the palpable facts of our common morality and the supposed judgments of religion. But it will be found, on closer inspection, that these apparent seceders from Christendom remain Christians in their whole view of the world, of God, of the human character and destinies ; speak a language and appeal to principles and sympathies essentially Christian ; draw

their moral life from the Christendom which surrounds them ; receive their wives at Christian altars ; and bring up their children in the Christian faith. Many a great writer who is brought forward as a proof that the intellect of the age is Christian no longer, will be found, on examination, to have nothing in his writings which is not derived from a Christian source. Schleiermacher appears to be hailed as one of those who, by their criticisms, have pronounced the doom of the "popular religion;" Schleiermacher received the Eucharist on his death-bed, and died declaring that he had adhered to the living spirit of Christianity rather than to the dead letter. He may have been illogical ; but he cannot be said, historically, not to have been a Christian.

In France, perhaps, alone, owing to peculiar disasters, not the least of which was the hypocritical re-establishment of Roman Catholicism by the statecraft of Napoleon, a really great estrangement of the people from Christianity has taken place. And what are the consequences of the estrangement to the progress of this great nation, which not a century ago was intellectually at the head of Europe, which seemed by her efforts to have opened a new era of social justice for mankind, and which the atheistical school desire now, in virtue of her partial atheism, to erect into the president and arbitress of the civilized world ? The consequences are a form of government, not created by a supreme effort of modern intellect, but borrowed from that of declining Rome, which, bereft of Christian hope, immolates the future to the present ; a despairing abandonment of personal liberty and freedom of opinion ; a popular literature of

heathen depravity; and a loss of moral objects of interest, while military glory and material aggrandizement are worshipped in their place. If this state of things is progressive, what is retrograde?

There are three great elements of human progress, the moral, the intellectual, and the productive; or virtue, knowledge, and industry. But these three elements, though distinct, are not separate, but closely connected with each other. There is a moral element in every good work of intellect, and in every good production of industry; while, on the other hand, the works of intellect and the productions of industry exercise a vast influence on our moral condition. It was contended in a former lecture that the moral element of progress was the cardinal element of the three; the direction of the intellect to good objects, which leads to the attainment of useful knowledge, and the self-exertion and self-denial which constitute industry, being determined by morality, without which the intellectual and productive powers of man would be aimless and wandering forces, working at random good and evil. It was also contended that the formation of good moral character, the only object which comprehends all the rest, and which all human actions, discoveries, and productions promote and subserve, was the final end of all human effort, the ultimate mark and goal of human progress, and the true key to history. If these positions are sound, the main questions, in determining the ultimate relation between Christianity and human progress, will be, whether the Christian morality is sound and universal, and whether the Christian type of character is perfect and final. It is only if the Chris-

tian morality is not sound and universal that it can be discarded or transcended by the moral progress of the race. It is only if the type of character consecrated in the Gospels is not perfect and final that its consecration can ever interfere with the aspirations of humanity advancing towards the goal of purity and perfection. These are the main questions; we shall also have to consider whether Christianity conflicts with or discourages any special kind of human progress, intellectual or industrial.

What is the root and essence of moral character? What is it that connects together all those moral habits which we call the virtues, and warrants us in giving them the collective name of virtue? Courage, chastity, and generosity are, at first sight, three different things: in what respect is it that they are one? What is the common element of moral attraction in all that vast variety of character, regular or irregular, severe or tender, to which, in history and life, our hearts are drawn? Some one principle there must surely be which traverses all this uniform diversity, some one principle which our hearts would recognise, not as a mere intellectual speculation, but as the real spring of moral endeavour in themselves. And if there be such a principle, it will, on our hypothesis, be the key at once to the life of individual man and to the history of the race. It will contain in it not only a true moral philosophy, but a true philosophy of history.

Now, whatever mystery may shroud the ultimate source of our moral being, thus much seems tolerably certain, that the seat of the moral principle in our

nature is indicated and covered by the quality to which, according to the intensity of its manifestation, we give various names, ranging from benevolence to self-sacrifice. There is, I apprehend, no special virtue which is not capable of being resolved into this. To take those which appear least obviously identical with benevolence—courage, temperance, and chastity. Courage, when it is a virtue, is the sacrifice of our personal safety to the interests of our kind, which rises to its highest pitch in the case of martyrdom. Temperance fits us, while intemperance unfits us, to perform our duty to society, and spares, while intemperance wastes, the common store. Chastity is, in like manner, a sacrifice of the selfish animal passions to the social principle, since the indulgence of lust both involves the corruption and misery of its victims, and destroys in the man who indulges it the capacity for pure affection. We need not here discuss the question whether there is any virtue which is solely and purely self-regarding. If there is, its good effects must end with the individual life; it cannot be one of the springs of human progress.

Benevolence may of course take as many special forms, and produce as great a variety of benevolent characters, as there are social and unselfish objects in the world. It may be the advocacy of a particular cause or principle; it may be the pursuit of a particular ideal: both the cause or principle and the ideal being matters of common interest and tending to the common good. It may be the devotion to science or art, as the instruments of human improvement and happiness, which forms the moral side of the intellectual life. It may be extended

in its scope to the whole human race, and labour for the universal good of man; or it may be limited to the narrow circle of a nation, a guild, a family, through whom, however, it does indirectly and unconsciously embrace mankind. It is sure to be affected, and almost sure to be somewhat distorted in its special character, by the position of each man in life, and to shew itself as a peculiar self-devotion to country in the case of the good soldier, and as a peculiar self-devotion to the interests of justice in the case of the good judge. Hence arise a multiplicity of derivative and secondary virtues, and an infinite variety of characters, of each of which some derivative and secondary virtue is the peculiar stamp. But multiform as these virtues and characters are, it will be found that they are uniform also; that, upon examination, they may all be reduced to benevolence in one or other of its various degrees; and that on this principle the moral philosopher and the educator, if they would attain to real results, must take their stand. In the same manner, I apprehend that the approbation and affection which benevolence obtains for us, these, and not anything more individual or more transcendental, are the real earthly assurance and support of virtue, the earthly object of virtuous endeavours, the supreme happiness of our earthly life. What these foreshadow, and how they foreshadow it, is not a fit subject of inquiry here; but certainly the Gospel holds out a social, not an individual heaven.

In a former lecture the question was raised whether morality lies in action or in character, and whether our approbation of moral actions is translated from

action to character, or from character to action. Some reasons were given for inclining to believe that it is in character rather than in action that morality lies. It is said, on the other hand, that character is only a formed disposition to act in a particular way, and that our approbation attaches to good character only as the source, actual or presumptive, of good action. I reply, that character is not only a disposition to act, it is a disposition to feel and to participate in certain emotions; emotions which are sometimes incapable of being translated into action. You would not say that a man's character was perfect who should be incapable of sympathizing in the emotions produced by the most glorious or the most tender visions of nature; and yet what special action can flow from such sympathies as these? Does the presence of a beloved friend give us pleasure merely as implying a likelihood of his active beneficence? And again, what presumption of active beneficence can there be in the case of the dead, our affection for whose characters often survives the grave? This passive element in character, generally called sensibility, seems to be a main source of poetry and art, which play so important a part in human life and history. Now a character formed on benevolence, as it implies not only action, but affection and the power of sympathy, does embrace a passive as well as an active element, or rather, it presents a passive as well as an active phase; and in this respect again it seems to be perfect, universal, and final. A character formed on the moral basis propounded by Gibbon, the love of pleasure and the love of action, would fail, among other things, in not having a sympathetic side.

Now Christianity rests on one fundamental moral principle, as the complete basis of a perfect moral character, that principle being the love of our Neighbour, another name for Benevolence. And the type of Character set forth in the Gospel history is an absolute embodiment of Love both in the way of action and affection, crowned by the highest possible exhibition of it in an act of the most transcendent self-devotion to the interest of the human race. This being the case, it is difficult to see how the Christian morality can ever be brought into antagonism with the moral progress of mankind ; or how the Christian type of character can ever be left behind by the course of human development, lose the allegiance of the moral world, or give place to a newly emerging and higher ideal. This type, it would appear, being perfect, will be final. It will be final, not as precluding future history, but as comprehending it. The moral efforts of all ages, to the consummation of the world, will be efforts to realize this character, and to make it actually, as it is potentially, universal. While these efforts are being carried on under all the various circumstances of life and society, and under all the various moral and intellectual conditions attaching to particular men, an infinite variety of characters, personal and national, will be produced ; a variety ranging from the highest human grandeur down to the very verge of the grotesque. But these characters, with all their variations, will go beyond their source and their ideal only as the rays of light go beyond the sun. Humanity, as it passes through phase after phase of the historical movement, may advance indefinitely in excellence ; but its advance will be an indefinite approximation

to the Christian type. A divergence from that type, to whatever extent it may take place, will not be progress, but debasement and corruption. In a moral point of view, in short, the world may abandon Christianity, but it can never advance beyond it. This is not a matter of authority, or even of Revelation. If it is true, it is a matter of reason as much as anything in the world.

There are many peculiarities arising out of personal and historical circumstances, which are incident to the best human characters, and which would prevent any one of them from being universal or final as a type. But the type set up in the Gospels as the Christian type seems to have escaped all these peculiarities, and to stand out in unapproached purity as well as in unapproached perfection of moral excellence.

The good moral characters which we see among men fall, speaking broadly, into two general classes; those which excite our reverence and those which excite our love. These two classes are essentially identical, since the object of our reverence is that elevation above selfish objects, that dignity, majesty, nobleness, appearance of moral strength which is produced by a disregard of selfish objects in comparison with those which are of a less selfish and therefore of a grander kind. But though essentially identical, they form, as it were, two hemispheres in the actual world of moral excellence; the noble and the amiable, or, in the language of moral taste, the grand and the beautiful. Being, however, essentially identical, they constantly tend to fusion in the human characters which are nearest to perfection, though, no human character being perfect, they are never actually fused. Now, if the

type proposed in the Gospels for our imitation were characteristically noble or characteristically amiable, charcteristically grand or characteristically beautiful, it might have great moral attractions, but it would not be universal or final. It would belong to one peculiar hemisphere of character, and even though man might not yet actually have transcended it, the ideal would lie beyond it; it would not remain for ever the mark and goal of our moral progress. But the fact is, it is neither characteristically noble and grand, nor characteristically amiable and beautiful; but both in an equal degree, perfectly and indistinguishably, the fusion of the two classes of qualities being complete, so that the mental eye, though it be strained to aching, cannot discern whether that on which it gazes be more the object of reverence or of love.

There are differences again between the male and female character, under which, nevertheless, we divine that there lies a real identity, and a consequent tendency to fusion in the ultimate ideal. Had the Gospel type of character been stamped with the peculiar marks of either sex, we should have felt that there was an ideal free from those peculiarities beyond it. But this is not the case. It exhibits, indeed, the peculiarly male virtue of courage in the highest degree, and in the form in which it is most clear of mere animal impetuosity and most evidently a virtue; but this form is the one common to both sexes, as the annals of martyrdom prove. The Roman Catholics have attempted to consecrate a female type, that of the Virgin, by the side of that which they take to be characteristically male. But

the result obviously is a mutilation of the original type, which really contained all that the other is supposed to supply; and the creation of a second type which has nothing distinctive, but is, in its attributes as well as in its history, merely a pale and partial reflection of the first.

There is an equally notable absence of any of the peculiarities which attend particular callings and modes of life, and which, though so inevitable under the circumstances of human society that we have learnt to think them beauties, would disqualify a Character for being universal and the ideal. The Life depicted in the Gospel is one of pure beneficence, disengaged from all peculiar social circumstances, yet adapted to all. In vain would the Roman Catholic priest point to it as an example of a state like his own; the circumstances of Christ's life and mission repel any inferences of the kind.

The Christian type of Character, if it was constructed by human intellect, was constructed at the confluence of three races, the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman, each of which had strong national peculiarities of its own. A single touch, a single taint of any one of those peculiarities, and the character would have been national, not universal; transient, not eternal: it might have been the highest character in history, but it would have been disqualified for being the ideal. Supposing it to have been human, whether it were the effort of a real man to attain moral excellence, or a moral imagination of the writers of the Gospels, the chances, surely, were infinite against its escaping any tincture of the fanaticism, formalism,

and exclusiveness of the Jew, of the political pride of the Roman, of the intellectual pride of the Greek. Yet it has entirely escaped them all.

Historical circumstances affect character sometimes directly, sometimes by way of reaction. The formalism of the Pharisees might have been expected to drive any character with which it was brought into collision into the opposite extreme of laxity; yet no such effect can be discerned. Antinomianism is clearly a deflection from the Christian pattern, and the offspring of a subsequent age.

The political circumstances of Judæa, as a country suffering from the oppression of foreign conquerors, were calculated to produce in the oppressed Jews either insurrectionary violence (which was constantly breaking out) or the dull apathy of Oriental submission. But the Life which is the example of Christians escaped both these natural impressions. It was an active and decisive attack on the evils of the age; but the attack was directed not against political tyranny or its agents, but against the moral corruption which was its source.

There are certain qualities which are not virtues in themselves, but are made virtues by time and circumstance, and with their times and circumstances pass away; yet, while they last, are often naturally and almost necessarily esteemed above those virtues which are most real and universal. These factitious virtues are the offspring for the most part of early states of society, and the attendant narrowness of moral vision. Such was headlong valour among the Northmen. Such was, and is, punctilious hospitality among the tribes of the Desert.

Such was the fanatical patriotism of the ancients, which remained a virtue, while the nation remained the largest sphere of moral sympathy known to man,—his vision not having yet embraced his kind. The taint of one of these factitious and temporary virtues would, in the eye of historical philosophy, have been as fatal to the perfection and universality of a type of character as the taint of a positive vice. Not only the fellow-countrymen, but the companions and Apostles of Christ were, by the account of the Gospels, imbued with that Jewish patriotism, the fanatical intensity of which disgusted even the ancient world. They desired to convert their Master into a patriot chief, and to turn His universal mission into one for the peculiar benefit of His own race. Had they succeeded in doing so, even in the slightest degree, —or to take a different hypothesis, had those who constructed the mythical character of Christ admitted into it the slightest tinge of a quality which they could hardly, without a miracle, distinguish from a real virtue,—the time would have arrived when, the vision of man being enlarged, and his affection for his country becoming subordinate to his affection for his kind, the Christian type would have grown antiquated, and would have been left behind in the progress of history towards a higher and ampler ideal. But such is not the case. A just affection for country may indeed find its prototype in Him who wept over the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and who offered the Gospel first to the Jew: but His character stands clear of the narrow partiality which it is the tendency of advancing civilization to discard. From exaggerated patriotism and from exagge-

rated cosmopolitanism the Christian Example is equally free.

Asceticism, again, if it has never been a virtue, even under exceptional circumstances, is very easily mistaken for one, and has been almost universally mistaken for one in the East. There are certain states of society,—such, for example, as that which the Western monks were called upon to evangelize and civilize by their exertions,—in which it is difficult to deny the usefulness and merit of an ascetic life. But had the type of character set before us in the Gospel been ascetic, our social experience must have discarded it in the long run; as our moral experience would have discarded it in the long run had it been connected with those formal observances into the consecration of which asceticism almost inevitably falls. But the type of character set before us in the Gospels is not ascetic, though it is the highest exhibition of self-denial. Nor is it connected with formal observances, though, for reasons which are of universal and permanent validity, it provisionally condescends to the observances established in the Jewish Church. The character of the Essenes, as painted by Josephus, which seems to outvie the Christian character in purity and self-denial, is tainted both with asceticism and formalism, and though a lofty and pure conception, could not have been accepted by man as permanent and universal.

Cast your eyes over the human characters of history, and observe to how great an extent the most soaring and eccentric of them are the creatures of their country and their age. Examine the most poetic of human

visions, and mark how closely they are connected, either by way of direct emanation or of reaction, with the political and social circumstances amidst which they were conceived; how manifestly the Utopia of Plato is an emanation from the Spartan commonwealth; how manifestly the Utopia of Rousseau is a reaction against the artificial society of Paris. What likelihood, then, was there that the imagination of a peasant of Galilee would spring at a bound beyond place and time, and create a type of character perfectly distinct in its personality, yet entirely free from all that entered into the special personalities of the age; a type which satisfies us as entirely as it satisfied him, and which, as far as we can see or imagine, will satisfy all men to the end of time.

The character of Mahomet, and the character which is represented by the name of Buddha, were no doubt great improvements in their day on anything which had preceded them among the races out of which they arose. But the character of Mahomet was deeply tainted with fierce Arab enterprise, that of Buddha with languid Eastern resignation: and all progress among the nations by which these types were consecrated has long since come to an end.

M. Comte has constructed for his sect a whimsical Calendar of historic characters, in imitation of the Roman Catholic Calendar of Saints. Each month and each day is given to the historic representative of some great achievement of humanity. Theocracy is there, represented by Moses, ancient poetry by Homer, ancient philosophy by Aristotle, Roman Civilization by Cæsar,

Feudal Civilization by Charlemagne, and so forth ; the ancient saints having their modern counterparts, and each having a crowd of minor saints belonging to the same department of historical progress in his train. Catholicism is there, represented somewhat strangely by St. Paul instead of St. Peter. Christianity is not there : neither is Christ. It cannot be asserted that a person circumstantially mentioned by Tacitus is less historical than Prometheus, Orpheus, and Numa, who all appear in this Calendar ; and the allegation that there is no Christianity but Catholicism, and that St. Paul, not Christ, was its real founder, is too plainly opposed to facts to need discussion. The real reason, I apprehend, is that Christianity and its Author, though unquestionably historical, have no peculiar historical characteristics, and no limited place in history. And are we to believe that men whose culture was so small, and whose range of vision was necessarily so limited as those of the first Christians, produced a character which a French atheist philosopher of the nineteenth century finds himself unable to treat as human, and place, in its historical relations, among the human benefactors of the race? Do you imagine that it is from respect for the feelings of Christian society that M. Comte hesitates to put this name into his Calendar, beside the names of Cæsar and Frederic the Great? The treatise in which the Calendar is given opens with an announcement that M. Comte, by a decisive proclamation, made at what he is pleased to style the memorable conclusion of his course of lectures, has inaugurated the reign of Humanity and put an end to the reign of God.

The essence of man's moral nature, clothed with a personality so vivid and intense as to excite through all ages the most intense affection, yet divested of all those peculiar characteristics, the accidents of place and time, by which human personalities are marked,—what other notion than this can philosophy form of Divinity manifest on earth?

The acute and candid author of "The Soul" and the "Phases of Faith" has felt, though he has not clearly expressed, the critical importance of this question. He has felt that a perfect type of character was the essence of a practical religion, and that if the Christian type was perfect it would be hopeless to set up a new religion beside it. Accordingly he tries to point out imperfections in the character of Christ; and the imperfections which he points out are two in number. The first is the exhibition of indignation against the hypocritical and soul-murdering tyranny of the Pharisees. This is surely a strange exception to be taken by one who is himself a generous denouncer of tyranny and oppression. I have little doubt that had no indignation against sanctimonious crime been exhibited, its absence would have been seized upon as a proof of imperfect humanity. The second defect alleged is the absence of mirth, and of laughter as its natural and genial manifestation. This objection, though it grates strangely on our ears, is not unreasonable. Mirth is a real part of our moral nature, significant as well as the rest. The great ministers of pure and genial mirth, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Molière, have fulfilled a mission of mercy and justice as well as of pleasure to mankind, and have their place of honour in

history with the other great benefactors of the race. And, on the other hand, the attempts to expel mirth from human life and character made by certain austere sects, have resulted not only in moroseness but in actual depravity. If this element of good in history is really alien to the Christian type, the Christian type is imperfect ; we shall have a moral life beside it and beyond it, and at a certain point we shall become aware of its imperfection, and our absolute allegiance to it will cease. But before determining this question, the objector would have done well to inquire what mirth really was ; whether it was a radically distinct feeling, or only a phase of feeling ; and whether laughter was of its essence or only an accident ? Mirth, pity and contempt seem to be three emotions which are all excited by human weakness. To weakness add suffering, and mirth is turned to pity ; add vice, and mirth is turned to contempt. Mirth itself is excited by weakness alone, which it discriminates alike from the weakness of vice on the one hand, and from weakness attended by suffering on the other. The expression of contempt is a sarcastic laughter, akin to the laughter of mirth, and the milder form of pity betrays itself in a smile. There is, moreover, evidently a close connexion between laughter and tears. Pity, not mirth, would be the characteristic emotion of one who was brought habitually into contact with the weakness of humanity in the form of suffering ; but the same power of sympathy would render him capable of genial mirth if brought into contact with weakness in a merely grotesque and comic form. According as the one or the other was his lot, his character would take a brighter or a sadder hue ; but we cannot

help feeling that the lot of man here, having more in it of the painful than of the laughable, the sadder character is the more sympathetic, the more human, and the deeper of the two. That a feeling for human weakness is wanting in the type of Character presented to us by the Gospels, will hardly be affirmed ; though the feeling takes the sadder and deeper form ; the gayer and brighter form being obviously excluded by the circumstances of the case, as the Gospel history sets it forth. Perhaps, indeed, the exclusion is not so absolute but that a trace of the happier emotion may be discerned. Just at the point where human mirth passes into pity there is a shade of tender irony, which forms the good element of the whole school of sentimental humourists, such as Sterne and Carlyle, and which has, for its exciting cause, the littleness and frailty of man's estate. This shade of irony is perhaps just perceptible in such passages as that which compares the laborious glory of Solomon with the unlaboured beauty of the lilies of the field ; a passage by which Mr. Carlyle is strongly attracted, and in which he evidently recognises the root of that which is true in his own view of the world. It would seem then that mirth, humour, the great masters of mirth and humour, and the whole of that element in the estate and history of man, are not beyond the Christian type of character, but within it.

Mr. Newman has attempted to deny not only that the Christian type of Character is perfect, but that it is unique. What character then in history is its equal ? If a rival can be found, the allegiance of humanity may be divided or transferred. Mr. Newman fixes, evidently with some misgiving, and without caring accurately to verify a youth-

ful recollection, on the character of Fletcher of Madeley. Fletcher's character was no doubt one of remarkable beauty, and certainly not wanting in righteous indignation against Pharisees. But being that of an Evangelical Divine, it was produced, not independently, but by a constant imitation of the Character of Christ. Mr. Newman should have gone elsewhere for an independent instance; to the School of Socrates, to the School of Roman Stoicism, to the Court and Camp of Bonaparte. He knows history too well.

The truth is, that Sectarianism has narrowed not only the pale of Christianity, but the type of Christian character; and made men think of it as a rigid, austere, priestly, or puritanic mould, shutting out the varied grandeur, beauty, and beneficence of history: so that a schism has been produced between the consecrated type and the heart of man. There are in history a multitude of mixed characters, often of a very fascinating kind. In these we must separate the good from the evil before we pronounce that the good does not belong to Christianity. I will take a mixed character which I have more than once used as an illustration before, and to which all historians have been strongly attracted in spite of its great defects,—the character of Wallenstein. If that which is a real object of moral admiration in Wallenstein can be shewn to be Christian, as crucial an experiment as it is easy to devise will have been successfully performed. But we must begin by examining the character closely, and set aside those parts of it which are not the real objects of moral admiration. In the first place we must set aside the mere irregularity, which has in it nothing moral, but by

which we are fascinated in no slight degree. When morality is presented to us in itself, as the object of our moral affections, we cannot help entirely loving it; but when it is presented to us as a formal law, we cannot help a little hating it: and we are pleased when we are able to rebel against its letter, with the spirit, or some semblance of it, on our side; a feeling which is the real talisman of all that school of sentimental literature of which Byron is the chief. In the second place, we must set aside Wallenstein's reserve and loneliness, qualities which please us partly because they excite our curiosity and stimulate our social affections by a sort of half-denial, partly also because, from experience, they raise in us an expectation of real moral excellences, strength of mind, and that capacity for warm affection which often lurks in the most reserved characters while it is wanting in the least reserved. We must set aside again mere intellectual power, which is never the object of moral admiration except as the instrument, actual or presumptive, of moral virtue. The darker parts of Wallenstein's character, his violence and his unscrupulousness, are set aside without question: no one can worship them but the wicked or the delirious. There remains the majesty of his character, crowned by his proud and silent death. Now this majesty was produced by sacrificing the lower and meaner appetites and passions, above all, the passion of fear, to a moral ideal, which, such as it was, Wallenstein struggled to attain. The ideal was to a great extent a false one, and deeply tainted by the absence of religious sentiment to which a great man placed in the midst of bigots and Jesuits was naturally reduced. But it was an ideal; and

the pursuit of an ideal, though it be that of a Cynic, is essentially the pursuit of an unselfish object; it is an endeavour to elevate humanity at the expense of the selfish appetites of the individual man. The end of such endeavours is a common good. It is an addition to the high examples and the nobleness of the world. Nor is the reward anything but the affection of man, which proud, high characters only seek more deeply when they seem perhaps, even to themselves, to scorn and repel it. The case may be put in other, probably in more exact and truer terms, but I do not think it can be put so as to make it anything but a case of self-denial and self-sacrifice; and if it be a case of self-denial and self-sacrifice, it belongs to the Christian type. To the same type unquestionably belongs that resignation in death which so deeply moves our hearts as a victory over our great common enemy, and which completes the historical figure of Wallenstein. His acts of mercy, his protests against cruel persecution, the traits of his conjugal affection, need no reconciling explanation to bring them within the Christian pale.

History will trace a moral connexion, where it really exists, through all intellectual divisions and under all eclipses of intellectual faith. In her eyes Christendom remains morally one, though divided, ecclesiastically, by a thousand accidents, by a thousand infirmities, by a thousand faults.

It is said that Voltaire and Rousseau were great contributors to human progress; and that they were not Christians, but enemies to Christianity and outcasts from the Christian pale. I admit that Voltaire and Rousseau,

in spite of the fearful mischief which every rational man must admit them to have done, were contributors to human progress, but I deny that so far as they were contributors to human progress they were enemies to Christianity, or outcasts from the Christian pale. Voltaire contributed to human progress in spite of his unchristian levity, mockery, vanity, and obscenity, by preaching Christian beneficence, Christian toleration, Christian humanity, Christian hatred of Pharisaical oppression. Rousseau contributed to human progress in spite of his unchristian impurity, and the egotistical madness from which practical Christianity would have saved him, by preaching Christian brotherhood and Christian simplicity of life. Rousseau's writings are full of the Gospel. His theory of the world is couched in distinctly Gospel language, and put into the mouth of a Christian minister. Voltaire railed against what he imagined was Christianity, but you see in a moment it was not the real Christianity; it was the Christianity of the false, corrupt, and persecuting State Church of France, the Christianity which recalled the Edict of Nantes, which inspired the Dragonades, which, in the abused name of the religion of love, murdered Calas and La Barre. Whom did Voltaire call the best of men? Of whom did he say, with an earnestness to which his nature was almost a stranger, that he loved them, and that, if he could, he would pass the rest of his life among them in a distant land? It was not the philosophers of Paris or Berlin of whom he spoke thus, but the Quakers, with whose sect, then in its happiest hour, he had come into contact during his residence in England, and whose

benevolence, tolerance, and gentle virtues he recognises as identical at once with those of the Primitive Christians and with his own.

The French Revolution again, with all its crimes and follies, must, up to a certain point in its course, be accepted as a step, though a sinister and equivocal step, in the progress of mankind. But we have brought all that was good in the French Revolution,—its aspirations after universal brotherhood, and a universal reign of liberty and justice,—into the pale of moral Christianity with Rousseau and Voltaire. From no other source than Christianity was derived the genuine spirit of self-devotion which, it is vain to doubt, sent forth on a crusade for the freedom and happiness of man, the best soldiers of the Revolutionary armies,—those of whom Hoche and Marceau were the gentle, brave, and chivalrous types. On the other hand, it was not from Christianity, but from a dark depravation of Christianity, abhorred by all in whom the graces of the Christian character are seen, that the Montagnards derived that lust of persecution which reproduced the Inquisition and its butcheries in the Committee of Public Safety and the Reign of Terror. There are men, neither mad nor wicked, to whom the enthusiasts of the Jacobin Club are still objects of fervent admiration. Such a feeling is strange, but not unaccountable. The account of it is to be found in the faint tradition of Christian fraternity which passed from the Gospel through Rousseau to Robespierre and St. Just, and which has redeemed even these sinister names from the utter execration of history. Deep as was the abyss of crime into which those fanatics

fell, there was a deeper abyss beyond. All influence of Christianity was indeed gone when the lives of millions and the hopes of a world were sacrificed, not to any political or social visions, however chimerical, but to the utterly selfish and utterly atheistic ambition of Napoleon. The worship of that conqueror by the nation which gave the blood of its children to his evil deity for the sake of sharing his domination, was, under the forms of a civilized age, the worship of Moloch and the worship of Cæsar, the old antagonists of Jehovah and of Christ. Comte is at least an impartial witness in this matter; and Comte sees progress in Jacobinism, where Christianity was still faintly present, while he most justly pronounces the domination of Napoleon to have been utterly retrograde.

Does Christianity, then, interfere with progress of any particular kind, intellectual or industrial?

Does it interfere with the progress of science? As a matter of fact, science has not only been advanced, but for the most part created by Christians. A bigoted or cowardly theology has indeed created some confusion in the relations between science and religion, by attempting to dominate beyond its proper sphere; but the highest scientific minds have found no difficulty in keeping their own course clear, and preserving religious and moral Christianity, in spite of any imperfections in the scientific ideas of its teachers caused by their having lived in an unscientific age. That religious persecution has fearfully interfered with science, and every other kind of intellectual progress, both by its direct and its indirect effects, may be easily granted. But the tendency to

persecution has historically been limited to countries in which certain vicious relations existed between religion and political power. If it has been found beyond these limits, it was as a lingering habit and in an expiring state.

Is it the Christian conception of God that is likely to conflict with the progress of science, or of moral philosophy? We see at once that Polytheism, subjecting the different parts of nature to the sway of different Powers, conflicts with the unity of creation which the progress of science displays. Let it be shewn that Christian Monotheism does the same. There is indeed—and it is a momentous fact in historical philosophy—what Hume calls a Natural History of Religion. All nations have been endowed with the same germ or religious sentiment; but they have made to themselves different images of God, according to the peculiar aspects of nature with which they were brought into contact, and the state of their own civilization. The tendency is not yet extinct. Narrow-minded men of science, accustomed to only one sphere of thought, still create for themselves what they think a grander Deity in their own image, rob the Divine Nature of its moral part, and set up a scientific God. If the Christian conception of the Deity were tainted by one of these historical accidents, even in the slightest degree, the time would come, in the course of human inquiry, when history would acknowledge the grandeur of such a conception, record its temporary beneficence, and number it with the past. But it is tainted with no historical accident whatever. It is Pure Paternity. What discoveries respecting man or the world, what progress of science or philosophy, can be imagined, with which

the simple conception of God as the Father of All could possibly conflict?

It is true that Christianity has something of a mysterious character. But that, on this account, it must interfere with intellectual freedom, or anything for which intellectual freedom is requisite, can hardly be said, when Hume himself emphatically speaks of the world as a mystery, and when the acutest writers of the same school at the present day find it necessary to gratify a true intellectual instinct by reminding us that, after all, beyond that which science makes known to us there lies the mysterious Unknown.[a]

The moral source and support of great scientific inquiries, as of other great undertakings for the good of mankind, is self-devotion; and self-devotion is the Christian virtue.

Does Christianity interfere with political progress? The great instrument of political progress is generally allowed to be liberty. It is allowed to be so ultimately even by those who wish to suppress it provisionally, and to inaugurate for the present a despotic dictatorship of their own ideas. And Christianity, by first proclaiming the equality and brotherhood of men, became the parent of just and enduring liberty. What spiritual power presided over the birth of our free institutions? Was it not the earnest though narrow and distorted Christianity of the Middle Ages, which still, though its hour is past, shews its ancient spirit in Montalembert? What power was it that directly consecrated the principle of local self-

[a] See Mr. Herbert Spencer's work on "First Principles," p. 223.

government, the foundation of all true liberty, in the religious association of the parish? Cast your eyes over the map of nations, and see whether sincere Christianity and political freedom are unsuited to dwell together. Name, if you can, any great Christian philosopher who has been an enemy to freedom. On the other hand, Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, were Imperialists; they all belonged, though in different degrees, to the school which takes a sensual and animal view of man, mistrusts all moral and spiritual restraints, and desires a strong despotism to preserve tranquillity, refinement, and the enjoyments and conveniences of life. It need not be added that the most fanatical enemies of Christianity at the present day are also fanatical Imperialists. We have almost a decisive instance of the two opposite tendencies in the case of Rousseau and Voltaire. Rousseau had far more of the Gospel in his philosophy than Voltaire: and while the political Utopia of Voltaire inclined on the whole to Imperialism, being, in fact, a visionary China, and his sympathies were with those whom he imagined to be the beneficent despots of his age, the political Utopia of Rousseau inclined to an exaggeration of liberty, being a visionary State of Nature, and his sympathies were entirely with the people. What are the elements external to itself which Christianity has found most cognate, and of which it has taken up most into its own system? They are the two free nations of antiquity,—nations whose freedom indeed was a narrow, and therefore a short-lived one, compared with that of Christendom, but whose thoughts and works were those of the free. The game of freedom is a bold game; those

who play it, unlike the Imperialist, must be prepared to face present turbulence, extravagance, and waywardness, and much besides that is disappointing and repulsive, for the sake of results which are often distant; while the Imperialist proposes, by a beneficent dictatorship, to keep all calm and rational for at least one life. And this bold game Christianity, by the force of her spiritual elevation, and of her cardinal virtue of hope, has always shewn herself able and ready to play. By mere force of spiritual elevation, with no philosophic chart of the future to guide and assure her, she turned with a victorious steadiness of conviction, such as science itself could scarcely have imparted, from the dying civilization of Rome to the fierce, coarse, destroying barbarism out of which, through her training, was to spring a higher civilization, a gentler as well as a better world. If Christianity has ever seemed to be the ally of despotism, it was because she was herself corrupted and disguised either by delirious asceticism, confounding self-degradation with humility, or by ecclesiastical Jesuitism intriguing with political power. The second of these agencies has, indeed, been at work on a great and terrible scale: on such a scale that those who saw no other form of Christianity around them may well be pardoned for having taken Christianity to be an enemy of liberty as well as of the truth. But the facts of history point the other way. The seriousness of Christianity and its deep sense of individual responsibility opposed themselves, though in a stern and harsh form, to Stuart despotism, with its Buckingham, its "Book of Sports," and its disregard of morality and truth. The spiritual energy and hopeful

ness of Christianity opposed themselves to the old Imperialism of Hobbes and the Sensualists, who would have sacrificed the hopes of humanity to material convenience. The charity and humility of Christianity oppose themselves to the new Imperialism, which we are told is to inaugurate a fresh era of civilization, and which is, in fact, an insane reverie of rampant egotism, dreaming of itself as clothed with absolute power to force its own theories on the world.

Does political progress depend on theory? Why should they study that theory less earnestly, with a mind less free from the disturbance of interest and ambition, or in any way less successfully, whose actuating principle is the love of their neighbour, while they are raised by their spiritual life above the selfish motives which are the great obstacles to the attainment and reception of political truth? Does political progress depend upon action? Political action requires a fixed aim, a cool head, and a firm hand. And why should not these be found for the future, as throughout past history they have been found, in statesmen whose objects are disinterested, and whose treasure is not here? Desperate anxiety for the issue is not necessary, or even conducive to success. A man might play a match at chess more eagerly, but he would not play it better, if his life were staked on the game. It was not supposed that Tell's aim would be steadier when the apple was placed on the head of his child.

We have been told that Christianity almost stifled the political genius of Cromwell. "Almost" is a saving word. The greatest statesman, perhaps, that the world

ever saw, and the one who most largely contributed to the greatness of his country, even in the most vulgar and material sense, not only was a Christian, but drew from Christianity, though tainted in his case with Judaism, every principle, every idea, every expression of his public life.

If it is philanthropic enterprise that is to regenerate society, with this, again, Christianity has, to say the least, no inherent tendency to interfere. I ventured to challenge the Positivists, who condemn the Christian view of the world for giving the negro races no part in the historical development of humanity, to shew what part in the historical development of humanity these races had really played. It is Christianity alone, I submit, which assigns them a place in history, by making them the subjects of those great missionary and philanthropic enterprises which form so important a part of the life of Christendom. As the subjects of such enterprises they do indeed contribute to the development of humanity by developing the religious sympathies and affections. Positive Science requires that these races, like the rest, should pass, by a spontaneous movement, from Fetichism into Polytheism, and so, through Monotheism, into Atheism, with the corresponding series of social and political phases. Christianity, disregarding Positive Science, sets to work to turn them into civilized Christians.

An eminent writer, before mentioned, thinks he has contravened Christianity in saying that now, having ceased to be a Christian, he loves with a deliberate love the world and the things of the world. So he did when, being a Christian, he went as a missionary to the East.

To love the world, it is not necessary to think there is no evil in the world. On the contrary, it is the strong sense of the evil existing in the world that, by exciting the desire to remove it, has led to all the noble enterprises of history. Neither need the conviction, however deep, that the world is transitory, diminish the desire to labour for its good, if the good done is to be not transitory but eternal. We are told that the social activity of Christians must be paralyzed by the views which are alleged to be a part of Christianity, respecting the constant imminence of the Last Day. Why then is not all social activity paralyzed by the constant imminence of death?

Again, it is insinuated that the progress of enlightened views respecting the duties of nations towards each other, must be retarded by the dark lust of conquest which is inspired by the popular religion, with its gloomy worship of the God of Battles. I am unable to discern any historical foundation for this notion. Christianity is not committed to the conduct of the State Priests who sang *Te Deums* for the successful rapine of Louis XIV.; a rapine which, it may be remarked by the way, was at least equalled, when the last restraints of religion had been removed, by the atheist Emperor who afterwards sat on the same throne. Neither is Christianity committed to the excesses of fanatical sectaries who took the Old Testament for their Gospel instead of the New. The uncritical Puritan could not so clearly see what we by the light of historical criticism most clearly see, that the Jews were not a miracle but a nation; and that, like all other nations, they had their primitive epoch of conquest and of narrow nationality, with moral views correspondingly

narrow: though the whole of this natural history of the Jewish race was instinct with, and, as it were, transmuted by, a moral and religious spirit, to which it is idle to say a parallel can be found in the history of any other nation. The character of David, for example, by its beauty, its chivalry, and its childlike and passionate devotion, has sunk deep into the affections of humanity, and justified the sentence that he was the man after God's own heart: but he could not be expected, any more than a prince of any other primitive nation, to anticipate modern enlightenment and humanity by observing the laws of civilized war, and giving quarter to the garrison and inhabitants of a conquered town.

This error of the Puritans, however, after all, has not left so very deep a stain on history. They were not so very ignorant of the real relations between the Old Testament and the New. The notion of their having regarded their enemies as Canaanites, and smitten them hip and thigh, is mainly due to the imagination of loose historical writers. No civil war in history had ever been conducted with half so much humanity, or with half so much self-restraint, as that which they conducted in the spirit of their mixed Hebrew and Christian religion. Fanciful or cynical writers may picture Cromwell as feeling a stern satisfaction at the carnage of Drogheda and Wexford: but Cromwell's own despatches excuse it, on the ground that it would save more blood in the end. You have only to turn to the civil war of the French Revolution—carried on, as it was, in the meridian light of modern civilization, and with an entire freedom from superstitious influences—to know that even the stern

spirit of the Old Testament has not been the most cruel power in history. There has been, in truth, a good deal of exaggeration, and even some cant upon this subject. Men who weep over the blood which was shed by Jewish hands in the name of morality, are not indisposed, if we may judge by their historical sympathies, to take pretty strong measures for an idea. They can embrace, with something like rapture, the butcherly vagrancy laws of a Tudor King, his brutal uxoricides, his persecutions, his judicial murders perpetrated on blameless and illustrious men, because he belongs to a class of violent and unscrupulous characters in history whom their school are pleased to style heroes. I see that, according to a kindred school of philosophers, Titus performed an unavoidable duty in exterminating the Jews for rebelling against the idea of Imperialism, which they could scarcely, without a miracle, be expected to apprehend. Cæsar is becoming an object of adoration, evidently as a supposed type of certain great qualities in which the Christian type is supposed to be wanting. He stands as one of the great historical Saints of the Comtist Calendar, a month being called after his name. Yet this beneficent demigod put to the sword a million of Gauls, and sold another million into slavery, partly in the spirit of Roman conquest, but principally to create for himself a military reputation.

Then it is intimated that the political economy of Christianity is bad, and that it has interfered with the enjoyment, and therefore with the production, of wealth. There can be no doubt that Christianity, so far as it has had an influence in history, has always tended to the employment of productive rather than of unproductive

labour, and to the promotion of art rather than of luxury. But these are not yet alleged to be economical evils. Wealth has been just as much enjoyed, and the production of wealth just as much stimulated, by the building of splendid churches, by the employment of great artists, and by a munificent expenditure for the common benefit, as by the indulgence of personal luxury and pride. It is in Christian states, in states really Christian, that Commerce has appeared in its most energetic and prosperous, as well as in its noblest form; the greatest maritime discoveries have been made under the banner of the Cross; and he who says that the life of Gresham or Columbus was alien to Christianity, says what is historically absurd. Capital and credit are the life of commercial enterprise. The Gospel inculcates the self-denial which is necessary to the accumulation of capital; and, to say the least, it does not discourage the honesty which is the foundation of credit. Honest labour and activity in business will hardly be said to be condemned by St. Paul; and if the anxious and covetous overstraining of labour is opposed to Christianity, it is equally opposed to economical wisdom. Of course the first authors of Christianity did not teach political economy before its hour. They took these like the other political and social arrangements of the world, as they found them, and relieved poverty in the way in which it was then relieved. The science of Political Economy, since it left the hands of its great founder, has fallen to a great extent into the hands of men of less comprehensive minds, under whose treatment it has gone near to erecting hardness of heart into a social virtue. No doubt there would speedily be a divorce between

Christianity and the progress of such a science as this. But this is not the science of Adam Smith. Adam Smith understood the value, moral as well as material, of property; but he also understood the relative value of property and affection.

If the community of goods among the early Christians is cited as a proof that Christianity must be opposed to economical progress, the answer is, that Christianity has never erected, or tended to erect, this natural expression of new-born love and zeal into a normal condition of society. Whenever a great religious movement has taken place in history, the spirit of humanity has beaten in this way against its earthly bars, and struggled to realize at once that which cannot be realized within any calculable time, if it is destined ever to be realized here. Christian philosophers have pronounced the judgment of rational Christianity on Socialism in no ambiguous terms. Yet surely political economists are too well satisfied with their science if they feel confident that its laws, or supposed laws, have yet been harmonized with a sound social morality, and with the rational aspirations of social man. Surely they must see further into the future course of history than any one else can see, if they are able to assure us that the social motives to industry can never prevail over the personal motives; or even that the arrangements in which all reasonable men at present acquiesce are certainly nearer than those of primitive Christianity to the ultimate social ideal.

The Christian character has of course been treated of here in its moral and social aspect alone, because in that character alone it is manifested in history, and brought

into direct relations with historical progress. But it is inconceivable that the Love of God should ever conflict with the Love of our Neighbour. It is inconceivable that the one should ever fail to be supported and intensified by the other. The Comtists may preserve their love of Humanity in all its fervour; they will find it equally fervent in those who add to it the love of God.

It has been objected that Christianity, from the mere fact of its being an historical religion, opposes progress by compelling the world always to look backward. I scarcely apprehend the force of this objection, though those who make it evidently feel it to be of great force. If a type of character was to be set up for the imitation of mankind, it was necessary that it should be set up at some point in history, and that the eye of humanity should always be turned to that point, wherever it might be. But the fixity of the point in history at which the guiding light was revealed no more interferes with historical progress than the fixity of the pole-star interferes with the progress of a ship.

There is, indeed, another objection, of a much graver kind, to the sufficiency of a merely historical religion. Historical evidence, being the evidence of witnesses who are dead, and who may possibly, however improbably, have been mistaken, cannot rise beyond a high probability. It cannot amount to such absolute certainty as we derive from the evidence of our senses, or from that of our moral perceptions. And probability, however high, though a sufficient ground for our practical decisions, is not a sufficient ground for our religious faith and feelings. Butler has imported the rules of worldly pru-

dence into a sphere where they have no place. We may wisely stake our worldly interests on a probable, or even, if the prize be great, on a merely possible event; but we cannot worship and commune with a Being on a probability even of ten thousand to one that he is God.

But here again history, taking a broad view of the facts, finds a sufficient answer to the question whether Christendom is likely to perish under mere historical objections. In all that has really created and sustained Christendom there is nothing which rests on historical evidence alone. That which has created and sustained Christendom has been the Christian idea of God as the Father of all, the spiritual life supported by that idea, the Character of Christ always present as the object of Christian affection and the model for Christian imitation, and the Christian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The fact of the Resurrection itself, like the immortality of the soul, of which it is the pledge, rests on other than mere historical evidence. It rests in part on the doctrine, cognizable by reason, independently of historical evidence, that, from the intimate connection between death and sin, a perfectly sinless nature, such as that of Him who overcame the grave, could not be holden of death[b].

Has no great crisis, then, arrived in the history of

[b] It is commonly assumed that the theory respecting the formation of character by habit, the laws of which are analogous to the laws of matter, is equally applicable to the formation of vice and to the formation of virtue. But is not virtue rather a gradual emancipation of the reason and conscience, the sovereign powers of the soul, from everything in the shape of motive that can affect them in a mechanical manner and enslave them to the laws of matter, and to the material accident, death?

Christendom? Certainly a great crisis has arrived, and one which bids fair soon to merge small doubts and difficulties in mighty events. But it is not so clear that this crisis is an unhappy one. We may be sure it is one which has been long in preparation. Of the great events of history it may be said with more truth, or at least with more practical import, than it was said by Montaigne of death, "Every day they approach, the last day they arrive." We may be sure also that what is coming will be what the world has deserved; and the world has of late been a scene of religious, moral, political, and intellectual effort, often perhaps misguided and often equivocal, but still effort, which has at least deserved a different meed from that due to lethargy and despair. Finally, we may be sure that good will assert that indestructible quality which history recognises in it, and pass from the old state of things entire in substance, though perhaps changed in form, into the new.

The members of the divided Churches have prayed for their re-union through the conversion of all to the peculiar doctrines of one. It seems as though the prayer were now about to be granted in a less miraculous manner by the simple removal, through concurrent moral and political causes, of the grand cause of the division in Christendom. If historical symptoms are to trusted, the long death-agony of three centuries is about to terminate, and within no very long period the Papacy will cease to exist. The chief historical conditions of its existence have expired, or are rapidly expiring. In the supremacy of human authority over reason in the mind of man the power of Rome had its origin and

being ; and the supremacy of reason over human authority in the mind of man is now decisive and complete. The rationalistic theories of recent advocates of the Papacy, such as De Maistre and Dr. Newman, are suicidal concessions to the spirit of a changed world. The loss of moral allegiance, even in countries nominally Papal, has for some time past been continuous and rapid; and we ourselves well know the source whence the small, precarious, and equivocal accessions of strength have been derived. The great revolt of the Reformation was arrested in its progress over Europe partly by accidents of national temperament and comparative mental cultivation, partly and principally by the persecuting power of the great Catholic Monarchies, which conspired to preserve the Papacy as the keystone of despotism, and by balancing each other, gave it a factitious independence, of which the suspension of Italian nationality was also a necessary condition. The Catholic Monarchies are dead or dying. A Voltarian dynasty, the offspring of the French Revolution, sits on the throne of Charles IX. The successors of Philip II. have suppressed monasteries and have allied themselves with the liberal house of Orleans. The heir of Ferdinand II. has been compelled to recognise Protestantism and to grant a Constitution to the Austrian Empire. The balance of power between France, Spain, and Austria having been destroyed, the nominal head of Christendom has sunk to a puppet of French diplomacy, degraded to the dust by the sinister and contemptuous support which prolongs the existence of his mutilated power. The revival of Italian nationality seems now to be assured. It is vain

to think that the Primate of an Italian kingdom can be the Father of Christendom. It is equally vain to think that the national government of Italy can suffer an independent potentate, elected by a European conclave, to exist at its side. It is vain to talk of dividing the temporal from the spiritual power. To command the soul is to command the man. It was for the Suzerainty of Europe, and for nothing less, that the Papacy and the Germanic Empire fought, the one with the arms of force, the other with the arms of superstition. We might share the dream of a purely spiritual Papacy if we did not know too well that the Papal power, to whatever extent it may have been exercised for spiritual ends, was the creature of political accidents and political influences, aided by the instruments, not spiritual, though not strictly material, of religious intimidation and intrigue. The Papacy will perish, and in it will perish the great obstacle to the reconciliation and re-union of Christendom. Nor will it perish alone. It will draw down with it in its fall, sooner or later, all those causes of division which have subsisted by mere antagonism to it, and many which it has kept alive by its direct, though unrecognised, influence over the rest of the ecclesiastical world. Then, if Christianity be true, there may, so far as the outward arrangements of the world are concerned, once more arise a Christendom, stripped indeed of much that is essential to religion in the eyes of polemical theologians, but as united, grand, and powerful, as capable of pervading with its spirit the whole frame of society, as fruitful of religious art and all other manifestations of religious life, as Christendom was before the great schism; but resting

on the adamantine basis of free conviction, instead of the sandy foundation of human authority and tradition supported by political power. Those who imagine that such a consummation, if it come, must come with terrible convulsions and distress, do not consider that a great part of educated Europe has, in fact, for some time been united, and guided in the conduct of life and in all international and general relations, by a common Christianity. The world, as usual, has anticipated the results of speculation by tacitly solving a great practical problem for itself; and it has found that the brightness of the sunbeam resides in the sunbeam, not in the motes, and that the crystal floor of Heaven is not as unstable as water because it is as clear.





THE MORAL FREEDOM OF MAN.

A Letter to the "Daily News" of November 20, 1861, defending the principles maintained in the foregoing Lectures against the criticisms of an article in the "Westminster Review" of October in the same year, entitled "Mr. Goldwin Smith on the Study of History."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY NEWS."

SIR,—You were so good as to allow me the other day to use your columns for the purpose of defending my conduct as a Professor against the "Westminster Review."[a] I will now ask your permission to use them for the more agreeable purpose of saying a few words on the question between the view of history and humanity advocated in my Lectures, and those advocated by the Reviewer. I do not concur in the assumption that the daily press is not a fit organ for such discussions. The daily press has long since been practically accepted by the community as a fit organ for the discussion of everything that concerns and interests man. And it has this great advantage, that every one who writes in it must at least try to make himself intelligible—a discipline which

[a] The letter here alluded to, as it related merely to my personal conduct and character, is not reprinted."

many writers of great books would be all the better for having undergone. The notion that calmness, gravity, and moderation in the treatment of great subjects are confined to quarterly journals, is not, I venture to think, agreeable to experience.

So far as I may have occasion to allude to the "Westminster Review," I shall treat it, of course, merely as the exponent of certain opinions of which it is the organ, not as a criticism of my own work.

No part of the philosophy of history is more important than that which teaches us to study the history of opinion, and to separate, in each theory of man and of the world, that which demands our consideration as the result of pure thought from that which may be set aside as the mere expression of feeling produced by the circumstances of the time.

Thrice, at least, since man became conscious, or partly conscious, of his spiritual nature, and of the dignity of his being, a sort of despondency, the result in part of political disaster, has come over the moral world. Such a despondency followed on the fall of that narrow but vigorous political life, compounded of patriotism and Stoicism, which was embodied in the Roman Republic. It followed on the tremendous religious wars and revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It has followed on the terrible, and to a great extent fruitless, revolutionary struggles through which Europe has just passed. The abandonment of those social aspirations of man which are so intimately connected with his spiritual hopes gave birth in the first instance to Cæsarism, in the second instance to the absolutism of the eighteenth century which was

typified by Louis the Fourteenth, and erected into a Chinese Utopia by Voltaire. In the present instance it has given birth to Imperialism, which has naturally triumphed most signally in the country where the decay of religion, as well as the political lassitude arising from abortive revolution, is most complete. The loss of religious faith has in each of the three instances been attended by the prevalence of a materialistic superstition. The Roman materialist was the slave of astrologers : the last century hung on the lips of Cagliostro and his brother quacks ; and we fill the void of spiritual life with mesmerism and spirit-rapping.

At the same time the religious life of the present age is attacked by a powerful influence of a different kind. The pressure of false authority, reigning in old dogmatic establishments, has kept religion in an irrational state, as any man may easily convince himself by comparing the identity of the Christian character and life in all communions with the differences of their dogmatic creeds, and the vital importance attached by each communion to its own. Meantime science, having achieved her emancipation from authority, has made prodigious progress, and acquired vast influence over the life of man. Thus religion in her weakness and her fetters is brought into contact and into contrast with science in her strength and freedom : and no wonder that to exclusively scientific minds the domain of spirit should seem the last stronghold of unreason, which it will be the crowning triumph of science to subdue. Great men of science, indeed, like all great men, know the limits of their own sphere. But the lesser men of science, who, to tell the plain truth,

have often no more largeness of mind or breadth of cultivation than an ingenious mechanic, grasp eagerly at the sceptre of the moral world.

Comte, the real though disclaimed author of the "Westminster" philosophy, was placed in a position which exposed him to all these influences in the highest degree. As a Frenchman, he lived in the midst of political despair. He saw religion only in the aspect of French ultramontanism, and had no alternative before him but that of French scepticism, which he pardonably preferred. Rational Religion he had never beheld. His cultivation had evidently been almost exclusively scientific, and his course of Positive Philosophy is a perfect representation of the tendencies of exclusively scientific minds when unprovided with a rational theory of the moral world and a rational religion. He goes through the physical sciences; arrives at that which is beyond science; and impatient of the limit set to his course, tries to bridge over the gulf by laying it down, dogmatically and without proof, that the moral—or, as he chose to call it, the sociological—world differs from the physical only in the greater complexity of its phenomena, and the greater difficulty, consequent on that complexity, of resolving its phenomena into their necessary laws.

There can scarcely be a doubt that Comte, towards the end of his life, by which time he had been abandoned by Mr. Mill and all his rational disciples, was insane. Nor is it difficult to detect the source of his insanity. It was egotism, uncontrolled by the thought of a higher power, and, in its morbid irritation, unsoothed by the influence of religion. The passage in which he says that

having at first been only an Aristotle, he, through his affection for a female friend, became also a St. Paul, has been often quoted. But it is not a more rampant display of egotism than the passage at the beginning of his "Catechism," in which he depicts the "memorable conclusion" of his course of lectures as the opening of a new era, and shews how the great thinkers who had preceded him in history were precursors of himself.

In his later phase, having become a St. Paul, he proceeded to found a new religion, which is simply an insane parody of the Roman Catholicism before his eyes, set a mystic morality above science, and turned the "Positive Philosophy" upside-down. "Every one," says the "Westminster," "who has read anything of Comte's works, especially the later, knows that it is the very foundation of his method to give the predominance to the moral faculties." Those who having, perhaps, just read Comte, fancy that they alone have read him, will find on further reference that the qualifying words, "especially the later," are by no means superfluous.

All honour to Comte, however, for this—that he was not a mere reckless assailant of the convictions by which the world around him lived. He produced, at the cost, no doubt, of much conscientious labour and earnest thought, what he believed to be a new faith, and tendered it to mankind as a substitute for that which he took away. That the view of humanity which he adopted was ignoble and absurd was his misfortune, as the victim of unhappy influences, far more than his fault. If it were not so clear that he was deranged at the time when he invented his new religion, he might well be

said to have done Christendom a great service by trying, with decisive result, the experiment of satisfying man's religious instincts by a Creed and Church other than the Christian. As it is, this momentous task is left for the "Westminster," which, indeed, seems to have made great progress towards fulfilling it. For, whereas in January we were exhorted, with much solemn pathos, to brace up our courage to the point of going forth into the void in search of a new religion, we are now confidently invited to leave Christianity, and "stand with the 'Westminster' on solid ground."

In England, Comte has drawn his most distinguished disciples from the University of Oxford. When the University awoke from the long torpor of the last century, a violent ecclesiastical movement set in, which naturally took a High Church direction, and, as every one knows, threw many of our best and most gifted members into the Church of Rome. The recoil after that movement staggered most of us, and flung some out of religion altogether. These men fell in several cases sheer down into Comtism, and it seems that the University of Laud has still a fair chance of furnishing leaders to that persuasion. But some of them appear to be in an uncertain and transition state, which they confidently invite the world to accept as the "solid ground" of complete and final truth. At least they vehemently repudiate "atheism," and affect the phrase "spiritual." Do they mean by God merely a set of scientific laws? Do they mean by spirit only a substance, the phenomena of which are more "complex" than the phenomena of the material world? They proclaim that they are "neither

Atheist, Pantheist, Positivist, nor Materialist." Do they, then, believe in the existence of a personal God? If so, do they suppose that only "scientific" relations exist between that God and the spirit of man? Have they made up their mind about the immortality of the soul? All these questions we have a right to ask them when they invite us to leave our present position and "stand" with them "on solid ground."

Generations at Oxford pass quickly. Within the brief space of twenty years I have seen the wheel come full circle. When I was an undergraduate, theology was "the queen (and tyrant) of the sciences." Now it is an "extinct science." Then, the questions between the Vulcanian and Neptunian theories in geology were being settled by reference to the double nature of a sacrament. Now, we are settling all the questions of the moral and spiritual world by reference to the methods of physical science. In those days, scientific experience was set at nought, and we were told that though in science the earth might go round the sun, in theology the sun went round the earth. Now, moral experience is set at nought, and we are told that, morally, we may know action to be free, but that science pronounces it to be bound by the law of causation. The sneers which are at present directed against free-will are the exact counterpart, and the just retribution, of the sneers which were formerly directed against induction. We have trampled on the lower truth, and we pay the heavy penalty of producing enemies to the highest. When science has been fairly admitted to its due place in the University, its vengeful usurpations will probably

cease, and we shall no longer, in this way at least, bewilder and disturb the world.

One who knows Oxford can hardly doubt that the violence of the reaction among us has partly supplied the spirit which animates the "Westminster Review." Among other indications we may recognise with pleasure a kindly feeling towards the University, and a disposition to admit that though benighted in her general character, yet in virtue of certain secondary influences of a happy kind, such as the study of Mill and Grote, she is capable of producing great men. We may also perceive in an element, most hostile to all that is ecclesiastical, some traces of an ecclesiastical training place, such as an ardent passion for propagandism, and a tendency to flirt (to use an undignified expression) with the half-educated minds of mechanics, analogous to the ecclesiastical habit of flirting with the intellects of half-educated women. Do we not even see, in the extraordinary rapidity with which the "science" of some of these high scientific minds has been acquired, an analogy to the religious phenomenon of "sudden conversion?"

The special violence of Oxford reaction may perhaps be fairly gauged by comparing the "Westminster" with its nearest neighbour in philosophy, the "National." Those who are farthest from being adherents of the "National" must see that the opinions of its chief writers have been formed calmly and deliberately,—not under the influence of a furious revulsion of feeling. It gives at least a due place to science in its view of things; but it is not science mad; and it treats, at all events, with philosophic tenderness that which is at present

the life of the world. When I read violent and contemptuous invectives against "the popular religion," I always suspect that the writer has not long emerged from some particularly "popular" phase of that religion, and that his language is affected for the moment by an angry recollection of the thraldom in which his spirit has recently been held.

If the "Westminster" chooses to call this attempt at intellectual diagnosis an unconscious contribution to "Sociology," no one will have a right to object, except the few who cherish the purity of the English tongue. I see that I am supposed to have unwittingly subscribed to some new view of humanity in saying that the fall of the Papacy is "inevitable," and that the age of Louis XIV. "can never return." If my diagnosis is right, the influence of extraordinary circumstances may fairly be pleaded in palliation of certain very violent attacks on Christianity, in case those attacks should hereafter prove to have been premature. But the palliation would not extend to ungenerous tactics, such as the trick of jesuitically goading orthodoxy to persecute moderate liberalism, which are a mistake under any dispensation. Voltaire has never been forgiven for stirring up persecution against Rousseau.

The speculations of Mr. Buckle, again, are evidently dominated by the influence of a circumstance which is purely accidental. The reason why he makes religion the demon of history clearly is, that he imagines religion to be the arch-enemy of his divinity—Science. But the slight ground which there is for this depends on the irrational condition in which, as has been before

said, religion has been kept by false authority, embodied in State Churches. The free Churches of the United States have necessarily taken their hue in some measure from the Churches of Europe, with whose bigotry they are somewhat tinged. Yet, in the United States, there seems to be scarcely any complaint that free inquiry in any department is stifled or discouraged by religion. Even here, a good deal of exaggeration is required to make out a serious case of opposition between religion and science. When Lord Palmerston snubs the Scotch for desiring a day of religious humiliation at the approach of the cholera, instead of introducing improved drainage, he is lauded by Mr. Buckle as an Archangel of Light rebuking the Powers of Darkness. Would Lord Palmerston have told the Ironsides, on the eve of a battle, that if they meant to gain the victory they must fight and not pray? And, after all, is the Scotch nation so very marked an instance of the ill effects of religion in destroying good sense and preventing self-exertion.

I think I can shew Mr. Buckle that Christianity has recently rendered Science a most signal service, not the first it has rendered of the kind. He will scarcely deny that the ethical doctrine of self-sacrifice is a peculiarly, if not an exclusively, Christian doctrine, and that it was Christianity that first effectively filled Society with this aspiration. Now he has placed before us, in his last volume, a picture, evidently not imaginary, but real, of an intellect of first-rate power, drawn by natural ambition to the glittering prizes of political and oratorical eminence, but, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, renouncing those prizes,

and devoting itself, for the sake of its kind, to the inquiry after scientific truth. I cannot help thinking that such an instance, vividly present to his mind, ought to convince him that, contrary to his theory, moral excellence does contribute, as well as intellectual greatness, to the scientific progress of the world.

If Mr. Buckle has ever had the opportunity of observing the influence of rational and healthy religion on the intellect and character, he has not thought it worth his while, as a philosopher, to record the results of his observation.

None of us will escape the influences of our time. We shall undergo them, more or less, in the way of repulsion if not of attraction; but we may at least try to analyze them and guard against them, instead of courting their domination, and surrendering ourselves to their sway.

Such a question as that of the free personality of man, which is the real point at issue, is likely to be solved by each of us for himself, and by mankind collectively, on practical rather than philosophical grounds. Probably no man, when engaged in high and inspiring action, ever for a moment doubted his moral freedom, or imagined himself to be the mere organ of a "sociological" law. And the world is now once more entering upon a course of action of a high and inspiring kind. The lassitude which followed on the convulsion of 1848 is passing away. The emancipation of Italy, and the resolute but wise and temperate struggle which Hungary is making for her freedom, have revived the political hopes of man; and if there are discouraging appearances on the other side of the Atlantic, they are qualified by the signal

proofs of immense national energy and great faith in institutions which vast armaments of citizen soldiers, by their mere existence, undeniably afford. Even in France, the land of Comte, Proudhon, and Bonapartism, Jules Simon has gone forth the herald of a different state of things. A greater object of endeavour than any mere political emancipation or improvement begins to present itself to our view. The political supports of the Papacy having been cut away by the fall or desperate weakness of the old Catholic monarchies, on which, since the Reformation, it has rested, and the power of the Popes having (with deference to M. Guizot be it said) long ceased to be a spiritual power, the great pillars of irrational dogma and the chief source of schismatical division among the Christian Churches are in a fair way of being removed; and the re-union of Christendom, which for three centuries has been an empty and hopeless prayer, is likely at last to become a practicable aim. Probably it would be a greater service to humanity, on philosophical as well as on religious grounds, to contribute the smallest mite towards this consummation, than to construct the most perfect demonstration of the free personality of man. As things are, rationalistic and fatalistic reveries may be laboriously confuted; but amidst the energies and aspirations of a regenerated Christendom, they would spontaneously pass away.

The rational object of discussion in this as in other departments is to produce practical conviction. Names and theoretical statements may take care of themselves. The "Westminster" says:—"Anything which tends to deny to man the fullest power to develope his own

faculties, to control his own life, and form his future, we are ready to condemn." If it will adhere to this declaration in the natural sense of the words, there is nothing more to be said, except that if comets "formed their own future" they would be rather embarrassing subjects of "science."

A student and teacher of History, however, is compelled to deal with a theory which, if true, would deeply affect the treatment of his special subject.

We are in effect told with great vehemence of language, rising, when objections are offered, to a highly objurgatory key, that the free personality of man is an illusion; for that, feel as free as we may, our actions, both individual and collective, are determined by a law, or a set of laws, as fixed as those which determine the phenomena of physical agents, and of which what we call our free-will is only the manifestation.

The answer is:—This discovery is most momentous, if true. Let the law, or set of laws, be stated, and its or their existence demonstrated by reference to the facts of human life or history, and we will accept them as we accept any other hypothesis which is distinctly propounded and satisfactorily verified. But at present, not only is there no verification, there is not even a hypothesis before us. Comte, indeed, put forward a hypothesis —that of the necessary progress of society through the "Theological," "Metaphysical," and "Positive" states in succession. But as the "Westminster" repudiates the titles of "Positivist" and "Atheist," I may assume that it abandons Comte's hypothesis as an account of humanity, even if it adheres to it as an account of the

history of science. Mr. Mill has merely reproduced Comte. Mr. Buckle can hardly be said to have put forward any general hypothesis, unless it be that morality never promotes the improvement of the species, and that religion always retards it. His theory, again, would necessarily be rejected by the "Westminster," if that journal repudiates "Atheism" in a practical sense. And since it has led him to the conclusion that there are no two countries which more closely resemble each other in their condition than Scotland and Spain, I presume there cannot be much question as to its value in the minds of ordinary reasoners.

Sir Isaac Newton did not go about the world asserting that the motions of the planets must have a law, and railing at people for doubting his assertion. He propounded the hypothesis of gravitation, and verified it by reference to the facts. We only ask the discoverers of the Law of History to do the same.

In the same way, when philosophers proclaim with angry vehemence, and violent expression of contempt for gainsayers, that there is a better religion than Christianity, we only ask them to produce a better religion.

I have indeed suggested a reason for surmising that the verification of a law of History will be rather a difficult matter, since, History being but partly unfolded, a portion only of the facts are before us. The "Westminster" vehemently asserts that "the human race does not increase in bulk: *it changes in character. In no respect does it remain the same. It assumes ever new phases.*" The universal postulate of Science is that things will continue as they are. But here is a science which pos-

tulates that the things with which it deals will always be changing in every respect, so that the truth of to-day may be the exploded chimera of to-morrow. Direct verification of a general hypothesis in this case seems to be impossible. And as we have no other history wherewith to compare that of the inhabitants of this planet, verification by comparison is of course out of the question.

In regard to the individual actors of which the sum of history is made up, our "instincts," which the "Westminster" allows are to be taken into account as well as historical induction, tell us plainly that at the moment of action, all the "antecedents" being as they are, we are free to do the action or let it alone. They tell us, when the action is done, that we were free to do it or let it alone. And, in the form of moral judgment, they praise or condemn the actions of other men on the same supposition. This is not "metaphysics," nor is it part of any obsolete controversy about "predestination." It is at least as much a matter of common sense, and a ground of daily feelings and conduct, as the sensation of heat and cold. Till the sense of moral freedom, conscience, and the instincts which lead us to praise and blame, reward and punish the actions of others, are explained away, we shall continue to believe that there is something in human actions which renders them not merely more "complex" than the phenomena of the physical world, but essentially different in regard to the mode of their production.

I am not aware that any account has yet been given either of our sense of freedom or of conscience, except

on the hypothesis of free-will. As to praise and blame, it is said they attach to actions and qualities simply as they are "moral." It only remains to define "moral," and see whether you can help including in it the notion of freedom. We are told that fixed and settled dispositions are praised and blamed most, though, from the fact that they are fixed and settled, their actions are the least free. But we praise and blame such dispositions on the assumption that they were freely formed. Nothing can be either more fixed or settled, or more odious, than the disposition of a man who has been bred up among cannibals and thieves. Yet we blame it very little, because it has not been freely formed.

It may be observed that in attempting to explain moral approbation or disapprobation as attaching, not to free actions or freely formed characters, but to "moral qualities," the "Westminster" is simply reproducing the argument by which Jonathan Edwards attempted to reconcile moral sense with Predestination. Some caution, therefore, should be used in sneering at the views of Jonathan Edwards as a type of obsolete metaphysics.

As to the Aristotelian theory of "habit," I should not be afraid to impugn it (if it were necessary) any more than the Aristotelian theory that virtue consists in acting "in a mean." I am strongly inclined to think that Aristotle, and those who have followed him, observed vice and jumped to a conclusion about virtue. I have no doubt that in its progress towards vice the soul falls under the dominion of quasi-material laws, of which it becomes at last the utter slave. But I believe, and think it matter of general consciousness, that the pro-

gress of the soul towards virtue is a progress towards freedom.

The theory of human action in which the "Westminster" at present reposes is that "our acts are caused mainly by our own characters, which are formed mainly by our own efforts." It only remains to give us an account of "effort." Is it the same with action, or something different? If it is the same, the theory comes to this—that action is caused by character, which is caused by action. If it is different, tell us what it is, and bring it into the chain of necessary sequences on which your science is to be founded.

"The common sense of mankind seems to have assumed that the will possesses an immense power of subduing circumstances, forming character, and regulating action." Compare this with the allegation in the next page but one, that "our wills are determined by our characters and our circumstances." In the first proposition the "will" is evidently taken to be the original source of character. In the second the will is determined by the character which it originates.

Look too at the following passage, in which the "Westminster" attempts to turn upon me an expression I have used as to the constant working of the Deity in nature :—"If He is not working still in nature, he says, we have a strange idea of Providence. Then His will must continue to maintain regular laws. If He does, is He, too, absorbed into this chain of fate? Is His will sunk in a physical necessity? No, they will tell us. He works regularly because it is His nature to act by law. Then why is it so degrading to suppose that this is man's

nature also?" Does the reviewer hold that man "maintains the regular laws of human nature by his will?" or is his argument that, since it is not degrading to the Deity to be the master of natural laws, it is not degrading to man to be their slave?

The fact is, we have not before us in the "Westminster" any definite theory of human action, of humanity, or of history whatever. We have merely a passionate determination to assert that there is some scientific law which shall oust "the popular religion," and that even though the law cannot be found, it ought to be, and must be there.

A torrent of ridicule is poured upon me for having supposed that any inferences affecting the freedom of human action have ever been drawn, or that there has been a tendency to draw any, from the alleged uniformity of "moral statistics." There are various ways of receding from an untenable position; and that of contemptuously denying that it was ever taken up, if not the most gracious or ingenuous, is perhaps the most satisfactory and decisive. The same may be said of the contemptuous denial that there has been any disposition to applaud physical theories which break down the barrier between humanity and brutes.

It would be a very wicked, as well as a very silly thing, to oppose such a benefit to mankind as the formation of a new science. If the Reviewer thinks he can found a science on "high probability running not seldom into moral certainty,"—the estimate of the foundation of his new science which he appears willing to adopt,—let him do so by all means, and we will repose under the benefi-

cent shadow of the science which he founds. I have no fear lest man should be "degraded" by the reception of any kind of truth. On the other hand, I have not much fear lest I should "undermine all natural religion" by maintaining that free personality in and through which alone men can apprehend or commune with a personal God.

Of course there is no direct opposition between scientific prevision and the freedom of human action. The opposition is between the freedom of human action and the necessary causation on which scientific prevision is founded. As to the Divine prevision, which is so freely used as an *argumentum ad hominem* against the advocates of free-will, it would conflict with the freedom of human action if it were founded, like scientific prevision, on necessary causation. But we have not the slightest reason to believe that this is the case. We cannot form the slightest idea as to the mode of the Divine prevision, and till we can it will be a mere sophism to bring it into this question.

Christendom has been compelled by its moral instincts to reject the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination; and though that doctrine may put on the name of "Providence" or "scientific prevision," we shall be compelled by the same instincts to reject it still.

Transfer to the subject of physical science the admissions which the discoverers of this new science of humanity are compelled to make touching their subject, and let us see what the consequence to physical science would be. Suppose physical agents endowed with a "will," that will possessing "immense power of subduing

their circumstances," "forming their character, and regulating their actions;" suppose that their operations were caused by their "characters," and that their characters "were caused mainly by their own efforts;" that they had the fullest power "to develope their own faculties," and to "form their own future"—what sort of ground would physical science then rest on? With how much confidence would her inductions and predictions be made?

So far as human actions are determined not by the self-formed character and the individual will but by our circumstances, including the general constitution of our nature, so far they are of course the subjects actually, or potentially, of science. And on this ground the sciences of ethics, politics, and political economy are formed. It is not, I believe, in anything that I have written that you will find a low estimate of the benefits which an improved treatment of those sciences is likely to confer on mankind.

It is not philosophic to class under the head of circumstance the influence which the social actions of men have on the lives and characters of their fellows. That the life and character of each of us is immensely influenced by society, so much so as to confine the free-will and the responsibility of each within narrow limits, is a thought not unwelcome, but on the contrary most welcome, to the weakness of humanity. Yet each of us knows that there is something which depends, not on the society in which he is placed, but on himself alone.

Every man looking back over his own past life feels that he has been in a great degree the creature of cir-

cumstance, and of social influences. He can also, so far as his memory serves him, trace the connexion of each of his past actions with a motive, and of the motives with his pre-existing character, and the circumstances which surrounded him; and thus construct a sort of miniature philosophy of his own history. Yet every man knows that by the exertion of his own will he might have made his life other than it has been.

As to the theory of history which I have ventured to propound, viz., that its key is to be found, not as Mr. Buckle maintains, in the progress of science, but in the formation of man's character, which is pre-eminently religious and moral, I hope there is nothing on the face of that theory disgracefully irrational. Its truth or falsehood can be satisfactorily determined only when it has been applied to the facts of history. Few, at all events, will doubt that to write the history of man worthily, it is necessary to get to the very core of humanity, in which case "religion and morality" can hardly be excluded from consideration.

I emphatically repeat that I have no desire to obstruct the formation of a new science. I will reverently accept it when it is formed, in the fullest faith that it will be elevating as well as beneficial to mankind. But we may be allowed to think that there are such things as chimeras in the intellectual world, and that some of them are pernicious, even though they may be patronized by very excellent people. "Mr. Mill" and "Miss Martineau" are active thinkers, and persons of corresponding moral vigour; but it does not follow that their qualities will descend to those who are imbued with their theories,

any more than the purity of Epicurus descended to the Epicureans, or the fiery energy of Mahomet to the fatalistic Turk. As to "Sir G. C. Lewis," there is not a line in his works which warrants the "Westminster" in appealing to his name.

Suppose the Scotch were to accept as true the very defective, inaccurate, and misleading analysis which Mr. Buckle has given of their history; they would be led at once to discard that which, with all its imperfections and drawbacks, has been the root of their greatness as a nation. No regard for politeness could hinder me from calling such a consequence pernicious.

I drew a parallel between the circumstances of the present day and those of the last century; and I will conclude with some words of Dugald Stewart, written at the end of the last century, which, if not strictly relevant to the present question, have, I think, a bearing on it, and are good in themselves:—"That implicit credulity is a mark of a feeble mind will not be disputed; but it may not perhaps be as generally acknowledged that the case is the same with unlimited scepticism. On the contrary, we are sometimes apt to ascribe this disposition to a more than ordinary vigour of intellect. Such a prejudice was by no means unnatural at that period in the history of modern Europe when reason first began to throw off the yoke of authority, and when it unquestionably required a superiority of understanding as well as of intrepidity for an individual to resist the contagion of a prevailing superstition. But in the present age, in which the tendency of fashionable opinions is directly opposite to those of the vulgar, the philosophical creed,

the philosophical scepticism of by far the greater number of those who value themselves on an emancipation from popular errors, arises from the very same weakness with the credulity of the multitude; nor is it going too far to say, with Rousseau, that 'he who in the end of the eighteenth century has brought himself to abandon all his early principles without discrimination, would probably have been a bigot in the days of the League.'"

I am, &c.,

GOLDWIN SMITH.

Oxford, Nov. 18, 1861.

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